
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 01115016 6

BIBLE SIDE-LIGHTS



THE TRENCH ACROSS THE WESTERN END OF THE MOUND.

Frontispiece.]

BIBLE SIDE-LIGHTS

FROM THE MOUND OF GEZER

A Record of Excavation and
Discovery in Palestine

By

R. A. STEWART MACALISTER

M.A., F.S.A.

Director of Excavations, Palestine Exploration Fund

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

"*Thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin.*"—Isaiah xxv. 2.

SECOND EDITION

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON MCMVII

Butler and Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PROLOGUE

AN objection to the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund has not infrequently been stated in words such as these: "However interesting the researches of the Society may be to geographers or anthropologists, the plain Bible student, who is not concerned with abstract science, derives little or no benefit from them; and they do not help him to an explanation of any difficulties that may meet him in his reading."

This objection might very simply be answered by pointing out the far-reaching interdependence of facts, which make it

impossible to assert definitely that any given scientific truth, stored up in the *Quarterly Statement* of the Society, will not at some time prove of importance even to the non-scientific reader. But another answer is offered in the following chapters, in which an attempt is made to show that, while recording scientific facts as fully and accurately as possible, the Society and its officers are by no means blind to the immediate claims of the Bible student. One single undertaking of the Palestine Exploration Fund —the recently closed excavation of Gezer —is adopted as a text on which to base the essay, and a series of Biblical incidents or passages are chosen and studied with special reference to the light which, it is claimed, the results of the excavation have thrown upon them.

PROLOGUE

It need scarcely be said that this is not the final memoir on the Gezer excavations. That work is in active preparation; but publication is necessarily delayed by the magnitude of the task. Ten thousand descriptions of specific objects, three thousand drawings, five hundred photographs, and about two hundred plans have to be classified, and a selection from them prepared for press, before the labour is complete. This book is merely an earnest—a few sheaves selected from a great harvest.

GEZER—ITS SITE AND HISTORY



FIG. 1.—THE MOUND OF GEZER AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EXCAVATION.
(The Mound is the ridge in the background. The Threshing Floor of the Modern Village is in the middle, to the left.)

CHAPTER I

GEZER—ITS SITE AND HISTORY

ON the boundary line separating the foot-hills of the Judean mountains from the fertile maritime plain, which was occupied during nearly the whole of the Old Testament history by the Philistines; and about five miles south-east of the modern town of Ramleh; there rises a long low mound, rendered conspicuous by a modern two-storey house erected on its summit. This is the mound which conceals the ruins of the ancient town of Gezer (*see* fig. 1).

If the reader could have visited the hill any time between June, 1902, and

August, 1905, save when the winter rains or summer heats made work impossible, he would have viewed some such scene as is represented in fig 2. At the bottom of a deep trench, cut straight across the hill, would be a crowd of labourers, some with picks loosening the earth, others with peculiar adze-like hoes scraping it into baskets; while a ceaseless procession of boys and girls, filing backwards and forwards, carried away the baskets thus filled, and emptied their contents on to a rapidly growing "dump-heap." He would notice that the area in which the work was carried on was all subdivided into small compartments by low walls, crossing one another rather irregularly, exactly as is shown in the figure. These little compartments, he would learn, are the floors of rooms, and the low walls



FIG. 2.—GENERAL VIEW OF A SECTION OF THE EXCAVATION.

are the foundations of partitions. As he watched, possibly the foreman might bring for his inspection a small object of interest that had just been found by one of the labourers when sifting the earth before basketing it away: it might be a scarab of Amen-hotep III (*see* fig. 3), adding its testimony to that of the other objects already found among the houses, which experience had taught the excavator were to be assigned to the date of that monarch—say about 1450 B.C.

If the visitor should return a day or two later, he would find a change. The labourers would still be at work in the same pit; but the walls would have completely disappeared. If he should ask the cause of this, he would be told that after they had been carefully measured, planned, and, if of special interest,

photographed, they had been removed, in order to find what was underneath them. And if he should remain by the pit a certain length of time, he would see, as the work advanced, one stone appearing here and another there, till gradually a second series of walls, in style resembling the first but of a plan entirely different, would be exposed before him. So the process would continue from day to day and from week to week, till at last the rock at the core of the hill was reached. When the entire rock surface at the bottom of the pit was exposed, a second pit was begun, unless under the accumulated earth a rock hewn cave or cistern were discovered, which would of course require to be emptied.

The history of the growth of the great mound of earth—in some places as much

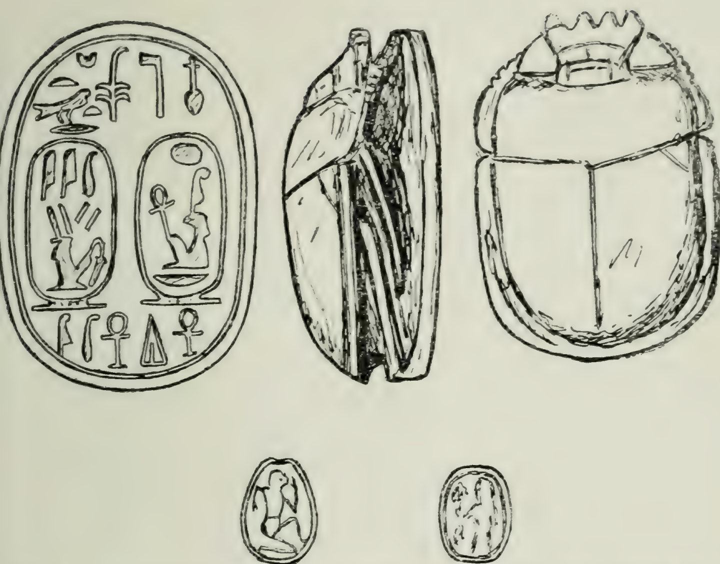




FIG. 3.—SCARAB WITH NAME OF AMENHOTEP III AND TWO OTHERS OF ABOUT THE SAME PERIOD, C. 1450 B.C.

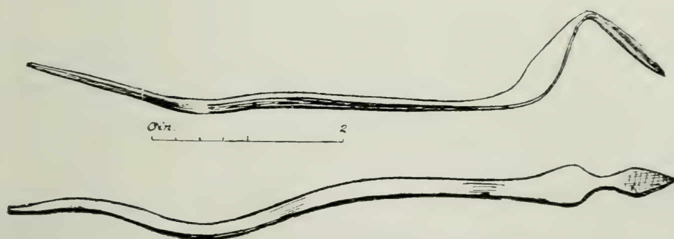


FIG. 4.—A "BRAZEN SERPENT."

as forty feet in depth—which to-day covers the rock and marks the once flourishing and important city of Gezer, is the same here as in the other ancient cities of Palestine. Defence was a necessity in the times when every city was a unit whose hand was against all its neighbours—a state of society reflected in the record of the Canaanite cities, each with its own king, which Joshua subdued, and even more prominently in the Tell el-Amarna Tablets. The city therefore, like that used as an illustration in Matthew v. 14, was *set on a hill* when it was founded, the steeper and more unscaleable the hill the better. Sanitary precautions are but little heeded even in the modern Orient, and there is no reason to believe that there was any restraint in the ancient cities against

flinging rubbish of all sorts into the narrow winding causeways by which they were intersected. It was nobody's business to clear away garbage, which was thus allowed to accumulate and to decay. The houses were built of rude stones, hardly if at all dressed, and cemented together with mud. This mud the rains of winter would little by little wash out of the crevices into the adjacent streets. By these and similar processes the level of the streets would from year to year become perceptibly raised. Moreover, badly built huts, such as formed the majority of the habitations in the city, could not be expected to stand for any considerable length of time; they fell before long into ruin, sometimes suddenly. A very remarkable illustration of this was found in the Austrian excavations of

Tell Ta'anuk (the Taanach of Deborah's Song, Judges v. 19). The ruins of a fallen house were unearthed, and under them were the remains of the persons who had been killed by the accident. They were a Canaanite mother and her five children, aged from about sixteen to about four. From the knife in the mother's hand, and the food-vessels round about, she had evidently been preparing the domestic meal when the tragedy took place. On her skeleton were her ornaments and amulets still in their places, and on the wall was fixed the image of the goddess whom the ill-fated family had regarded as their patron.

It may seem strange that no attempt was made by the contemporaries of this household to uncover and remove the bodies; but so it was. This leads me to

notice that it was not the rule completely to clear away the ruins of a house when it decayed and fell. The loose débris may have been taken up to use again, but the foundations, which must have been partly concealed by the accumulation of rubbish in the streets, were allowed to remain. The new house was built over the ruins of the older habitation, and with no reference to its plan. No town council existed to make regulations affecting the permanence of thoroughfares ; the site of the city was apparently a common, not subdivided into allotments under private ownership ; so that the builder of a new house might even block up or divert a street, if it so pleased him.

If a dweller in a European city could return to earth and revisit his old home, say two hundred years after his death,

he would be perplexed by the change of architectural style that had taken place in the meanwhile. He would, however, find the churches and other ancient public buildings more or less as he remembered them; and with these as landmarks he would before long recognize the thoroughfares to which in his lifetime he had been accustomed, though probably there would hardly be a single house that had not been rebuilt, or at least radically altered. The case of a resident in an ancient Palestinian city, returning in the same manner, would be different. No unwonted architectural developments would meet his eye; he would find his great-great-grandchildren occupying huts exactly similar to those in which he and his contemporaries had dwelt. But it would strike him at first

sight that the city-crowned hill was a trifle higher than in the days when his daughter used daily to climb it with her waterpot from the spring in the valley; and as soon as he entered the city gate he would be hopelessly bewildered. In his day the city had been a maze of narrow crooked causeways and blind alleys, which however he knew perfectly. On his return he would find a new labyrinth, to which he had no clue, substituted for the old. And even if by some chance there were a palace, or other building of a more permanent character, which had lasted from the city of his recollection, it would give him no help towards finding his way through the entirely altered lanes that surrounded it.

In dealing with the remains of an ancient city such as Gezer, therefore, we may

think of the different series of foundations, one above the other, as being like a set of bookshelves. The analogy is not quite perfect, for the change of level did not take place over the whole city at the same time, except in the not infrequent case of its being badly destroyed by an enemy and afterwards entirely rebuilt. For practical purposes, however, the bookcase illustration serves very well. In the top shelf will be written, for those who have eyes to read them, the records of the last inhabitants. The history, manners, customs, and beliefs of their immediate predecessors find illustration in the shelf next below.

So we proceed to the bottom shelf, where we learn what we may regarding the ancient people who were the first to dwell on the site we are examining.

Let us now apply these principles to Gezer, and endeavour, so far as the material at our disposal permits, to reconstruct its history. At the outset, however, an important question presents itself; namely, how do we know that the mound in which we are digging is the veritable site of the city with which it has been identified?

Fortunately we are able to assert the identity of our mound and Gezer with an assurance that would be highly indiscreet in the case of many other identifications of Biblical sites that have been suggested from time to time. The discovery of Gezer is due to the distinguished French Orientalist Professor Charles Clermont-Ganneau, and its story is one of the most interesting of the romances of modern archaeology.

GEZER—ITS SITE AND HISTORY

The site of this famous ancient city had been forgotten in modern times, and the guesses that had been made at its identification were random and futile. One day Professor Clermont-Ganneau happened to be engaged in the study of Mujîr ed-Dîn, a mediaeval Arab historian. He came upon a passage describing a raid made by certain Bedawîn on the coast-plain of Palestine, and their subsequent suppression by the governor of Jerusalem. The historian stated that the governor's lieutenant had preceded him, starting from the town of Ramleh; that some hours later, the governor, following his lieutenant from Ramleh, advanced as far as "the Mound of Jezar," and on arriving there heard the shouts of the combatants at Khuldeh. The thought at once struck the scholar that *Jezar* exactly represented

the Hebrew *Gezer*, the Arabic soft J taking, as usual, the place of the Hebrew hard G ; and the question occurred to him whether the site of the lost city were not to be found in the place thus designated. He was obliged to postpone the investigation of the question till an opportunity should arise for visiting the district, as no map till then published showed "Tell el-Jezar" marked upon it, though the other two places mentioned, Ramleh and Khuldeh, were indicated. In the following year Professor Clermont-Ganneau was in the Holy Land, and commenced his research. The conditions of the problem were that the site to be found must be between Ramleh and Khuldeh, and within earshot of the latter place. Inquiry at these two known points very soon enabled Professor Clermont-Ganneau

to find the mound, which still preserved its traditional name among the local peasantry; and the scholar's practised eye at once saw that this mound was the rubbish heap covering a large and important city. His previous investigations had shown him that if Gezer were situated in the region indicated by the Chronicle of Mujîr ed-Dîn, it would answer all the geographical requirements that the various known events in the history of the city impose. He felt justified therefore in announcing that the long-lost site had at last been recovered.

The announcement was met with some scepticism. It was remarked by the president of the French society before which Professor Clermont-Ganneau made his statement, that if some inscription were forthcoming, mentioning the name

of the city, the identification would command more respect. The discoverer very naturally replied that such a demand was unreasonable ; for in any case Palestine had proved a country remarkably poor in ancient inscriptions, and the chance that such an inscription should be preserved at the very place where it was required was exceedingly remote.

But the mound of Gezer has a peculiarity, which it displayed throughout the whole period of the excavation recently closed. It is essentially a mound of surprises ; and it commenced, even at that early period in the history of its investigation, to display this pleasing characteristic. In 1874 Professor Clermont-Ganneau was once more in Jerusalem, and he became known to the inhabitants as a collector and investigator of antiquities.



FIG. 5.—ONE OF THE BOUNDARY INSCRIPTIONS.

A peasant from the neighbourhood where the mound is situated brought him a paper on which he had rudely copied an inscription cut on a rock in the district. As might be expected, the unlettered copyist was unable to make an accurate or even an intelligible transcript; but the French scholar took a note of the place in order to examine the original whenever occasion should arise. In due time he visited the inscription, which was cut on a rock outcrop about three quarters of a mile east of the foot of the hill of Gezer (*see* fig. 5). It proved to be in two languages; one part in Greek reading:

OF ALKIOS

—this being probably the name of the governor under whose auspices the inscription was engraved; the other part in Hebrew, reading:

THE BOUNDARY OF GEZER.

Subsequently other inscriptions were found, apparently marking out an enclosure of land surrounding the hill, and affording the unhoped-for corroboration of the identification suggested three years before.

It is not too much to say that of few Biblical sites is the identity so definitely assured as is that of Gezer. We may therefore without hesitation return to the point where we digressed, and trace out the history of Gezer, knowing that it is in very truth the history of the mound now known as Tell el-Jezar.

The name of the city does not appear in the Biblical record until the time of Joshua. For the long stretch of history anterior to the Israelite conquest we

must rely on extra-Biblical sources. These are very meagre, and do not carry us back further than Thothmes III, that is, about 1500 B.C. Yet the excavation has revealed that behind this date there stretches for Gezer a further period of some 1,500 years, concerning the life of which written history is absolutely silent.

For it cannot have been much later than 3000 B.C. when a primitive race of men first realized that the bare rocky hill (as it then was) would be a suitable dwelling-place. This tribe was a cave-dwelling race, and the hill already had many natural caves hollowed in it, which were capable of being added to or enlarged if required, even with primitive tools, owing to the softness of the limestone. Water, the first necessity of life, was in abundance. The three primitive modes

of livelihood—hunting, pasturing, and agriculture—could be practised here better than in many places; for the rocky hillsides west and south of Gezer afford cover to a great variety and quantity of game; they also bear a scanty but sufficient crop of vegetation, and are to-day in the spring-time black with herds of the native sheep and goats; and the fields north and west of the hill are of extraordinary fertility. Further, for defence—another prime necessity in early days—the hill is admirably fitted. It is steep and not easy to climb; and being fairly high it commands a wide prospect, so that the approach of enemies can be seen and prepared for.

For perhaps five hundred years this primitive race occupied the hill; then they were driven out by a stronger and



FIG. 6.—TWO MODERN GEZERITES.

more civilized people. This was the first of the successive waves of Semitic immigration which have ever since been beating on Palestine. Canaanites, Israelites, Arabs—all probably much alike in body, in mind, in habits, and in language—have successively inhabited the mound through the centuries. The modern inhabitants, typical specimens of which are shown in fig. 6, must greatly resemble their ancient predecessors in general appearance.

At about the same time the influence of a nation, yet greater than the Early Semites, began to make itself felt in Gezer. This was Egypt, then at the height of the glories of her "Middle Empire." Many scarabs and other objects, referable to this period, were found in the lower strata of the mound, showing

that intercourse of some kind was carried on between its inhabitants and the great empire of the Nile. But, so far as they have been discovered, the monuments of Egypt itself remain silent regarding any event accounting for this intercourse, and its nature must for the present be regarded as obscure.

Gezer was captured by Thothmes III, and the bare record of the fact, in the inscription which that king left behind in the Temple of Karnak, is the earliest written reference to the city that has yet been found. More interesting is the information to be gleaned from three letters found among the great collection of tablets recovered some years ago at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt, which, as has so often been said, constitutes the "Foreign Office" correspondence of Kings

Amen-hotep III and IV, about 1450 B.C. From these we learn that Gezer, like the rest of the Palestinian cities of the time, was under the suzerainty of the Egyptian Pharaoh, being governed by a "king" named Yapakhi, who was answerable to the Egyptian monarch. Three letters from the collection were written by Yapakhi himself, and consist of petitions addressed to the king for assistance against the nomadic tribes that were a constant menace to safety in those days—as indeed they still are in some districts—who were pressing hard on the inhabitants of the city. There are letters, on the other hand, written from other cities (such as Jerusalem), which make complaints against Gezer, and accuse it of being disaffected towards the Egyptian overlord. Abd-khiba, king of Jerusalem, is especially

bitter. He complains that the Gezerites, leagued with the men of Lachish, have invaded his own territory and done him much injury. As the best means of revenging his personal wrongs, he endeavours to turn the Pharaoh's attention towards the hostile city, and invokes the strong arm of Egypt against it.

The records are again silent for about 200 years—a silence broken only by the solitary mention of Gezer on the famous "Israel" stele of Meren-Ptah—and the written history recommences with the books of Joshua and Judges. There is no record of a formal siege of Gezer at the time of the Israelite conquest; but the king of Gezer and a detachment of men came to the assistance of Lachish when Joshua was besieging the latter city, and paid for their interference with their

lives (Josh. x. 33). When the land was divided among the tribes, Gezer was allotted to the Levites (Josh. xxi. 21) dwelling in the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 3); but as was the case in several of the strong cities of Palestine, the conquest was partial only: the Ephraimites *drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer*[1] (Josh. xvi. 10; Judg. i. 29).

In the days of David, the Philistines, that mysterious people of whom we have heard so much and know so little, first appear on the scene in connexion with Gezer. It would appear as though the city were at the time actually in their possession, for, in 1 Chronicles xx. 4, we read of a fight *at Gezer* between the men of David and the Philistines; and in

[1] The Biblical quotations throughout this book are taken from the Revised Version.

1 Chronicles xiv. 16, Gezer is mentioned as the terminus of the pursuit of the Philistines by David after the battle of Rephaim. Probably he stopped the pursuit at this point because the fugitives had reached their own territory.

The Canaanites, however, still lingered on in Gezer till the reign of Solomon. When Solomon celebrated his marriage with the daughter of the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh *went up and took Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slew the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and gave it for a portion unto his daughter, Solomon's wife* (1 Kings ix. 16). This incident teaches us that Solomon's dominion did not extend westward so far as Gezer, as the Pharaoh would hardly have treated a possession of his ally and son-in-law in such a fashion. If it be asked why the Pharaoh destroyed



FIG. 7.—ASSYRIAN CONTRACT TABLET (FIRST FACE).

FIG. 8.—ASSYRIAN CONTRACT TABLET (SECOND FACE).

the city, the answer probably would be that Gezer had too easily commanded the great coast-line trade route from Egypt to Babylon, and probably the Canaanites had from time to time compelled caravans to pay toll to the city as they passed.

We must here notice two interesting objects discovered at Gezer, as they are so far the only known written documents yet discovered that bridge the gap between Solomon's repair of the city and the events in which Simon Maccabaeus was the principal actor. These are a pair of contracts relating to the sale of property, drawn up in Gezer in the Assyrian language and character, and written on clay tablets. Both are unfortunately imperfect; but enough remains to enable us to determine their purport. The first (figs. 7, 8),

which is dated 649 B.C.,[1] relates to the sale of the estate of one Lu-âhê by two men, Marduk-êriba and Abi-êriba: the estate included the slave Turiaa and his family, but the rest of the inventory is lost. The vendors give a guarantee that the persons sold shall be free from certain specified diseases for a hundred days, and from other defects for all time. An assurance is given of the completion of the transaction, and a definite agreement concluded, that any action in a court of law regarding it would be void. One interesting fact that we learn from this tablet is given us by the list of witnesses, which includes the name of the governor of Gezer, Hurwasi. This is an Egyptian name, and it indicates that the handing over of Gezer as a dowry to Solomon's wife did not

[1] Or perhaps 651.

necessarily imply handing it over to Solomon. It was the wife's dowry, the revenues from which were set apart for her maintenance and well-being, the equivalent of the "money" of Laban's daughters which they complained that their father had *quite devoured* (Gen. xxxi. 15). It remained in the hands of the Egyptian princess, and the Egyptians took care that it did not pass out of their grasp after her death. Thus we explain the existence of an Egyptian governor of the city in 649 B.C.

The second tablet is even more fragmentary. It preserves the name of Nethaniah, a Hebrew resident, and relates to the sale by him of a field. It is about two years later than the first tablet.

The chief interest in these two tablets lies in the evidence they give of an Assyrian

occupation of Gezer in the time of Manasseh: evidence that may ultimately be found to have some bearing on the story of the capture of Manasseh himself by the Assyrian captains (2. Chron. xxxiii. 11). This occupation was so strong that even Egyptians and Hebrews conformed to the procedure and adopted the language and legal forms of the Assyrian garrison.

A word may be said regarding the history of the city in post-exilic times. It had varying fortunes during the wars of the Jews and the Syrians, being captured about the year 160 B.C. by Bacchides, the Syrian general, and fortified and held by him for a year; and afterwards recaptured by Simon Maccabaeus, the great high priest, who fortified it and built for himself a dwelling-place within its walls. The

discovery of this dwelling-place was one of the rewards of the excavation.

The history of Gezer in the Roman, Crusader, and Arab periods, interesting though it be, does not fall within the scope of this book.

THE HORITES

CHAPTER II

THE HORITES

Chedorlaomer . . . smote . . . the Horites in their mount Seir (Gen. xiv. 6).

The Horites also dwelt in Seir aforetime, but. the children of Esau succeeded them (Deut. ii. 12).

As he did for the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them (Deut. ii. 22).

THE three verses quoted at the heading of this chapter embody the tradition that in the land of Edom there dwelt, before the Semitic descendants of Esau, a race known as Horites.

Of this people nothing is known, and the genealogies in Genesis xxxvi. 20, which give *the sons of Seir the Horite* and the *dukes that came of the Horites*, throw

no light upon them. The only fact that we can learn about them is derived from their name, which is supposed to mean "cave-dwellers," and which thus gives a hint as to the level of their civilization.

It was hardly to be expected that excavations conducted at Gezer, west of the Jordan, would have any light to throw on a race so definitely located east of the Dead Sea. That this was the case was one of the many surprises which the mound proved to have in store. Of course it must be understood at the outset that it is not claimed that actual remains of the Horites themselves were unearthed in the excavation; but that the race to be described in this chapter was connected with and was similar to them in race and civilization is highly probable.

The primitive race whose remains were

unearthed at Gezer were a small but muscular people. It is curious in this connexion that in Deuteronomy ii. 12 they seem contrasted with the Emim and Anakim, who *were accounted Rephaim*, or giants: the passage appears almost to imply that the Horites were not included under this classification. Certainly the aborigines of Gezer were not giants, their average height being but an inch or two over five feet.

They dwelt in caves, hollowed in the soft rock of the mountain—some wholly natural, others partly enlarged, others apparently entirely artificial. These caves were irregular chambers (occasionally groups of chambers, two or three in number, connected by narrow doors) from twelve to thirty feet, more or less, across. Usually they were entered by a door in

the roof, from which a rock-cut flight of steps led down to the floor of the cave. In a few cases some attempt had been made to carry off rain-water by a channel round the mouth of the entrance, but in the majority it must have run in unchecked throughout the rainy season, and formed large pools on the floor of the cave. In one cave a cistern had been cut for the purpose of collecting and storing the rain-water that thus penetrated. There was not the slightest attempt at decoration of any sort on the cave walls.

The furniture of the caves was of the simplest and most primitive description. Of course objects made of wood, skins, or other perishable substances, have necessarily disintegrated long ago, and nothing can be said about the articles in these materials that may have been in use



FIG. 9.—CAVE-DWELLERS' POTTERY.

The pottery (fig. 9) was of the rudest possible description, moulded by hand and sometimes decorated with roughly painted red or white lines. Metal seems to have been unknown. Knives and other cutting implements of flint were employed, and fine examples were sometimes to be found; the majority, however, were but roughly flaked. An important item in the furniture of these primitive dwellings was a quantity of smooth round stones, which probably served a variety of purposes. One would be used as a potter's palette, and was still stained with the red paint that had been ground upon it for applying to the vessels to be decorated. Others, found to be smooth on one side, would have been used for polishing or rubbing. Others, again, may have been used for hearth or heating stones; and

others were probably stored for missiles in case of wild beasts, or other undesirable intruders, finding their way into the cave.

The religion of the cave-dwellers is a difficult and obscure subject. Our principal information on this question comes from a pit about the middle of the mound. Here the rock-surface was found to be completely covered with saucer-like indentations (fig. 10), between eighty and ninety in number, and with a few larger vats. Underneath this rock-surface were two large caves. Of these, one, which bore evident marks of having been cut out with flint tools, was an extensive chamber approached by a staircase. It was divided into two parts by a partition, and was well adapted for the performance of the mysteries of religious medicine men, or whatever equivalent



FIG. 10.—THE "HIGH PLACE" OF THE CAVE-DWELLERS.

of these functionaries existed among the primitive race we are describing. The other cave is yet more interesting. It is a low irregular excavation, in the roof of which is a funnel-shaped perforation. A broad shallow channel is cut in the upper surface of the rock leading into this perforation. Within this channel an animal might be placed for slaughter, the blood being allowed to trickle through the hole in the roof of the cave. The cave was probably regarded as the habitation of earth-gods, to whom the blood was poured out as a sacrifice. The pouring out of blood as well as other liquids as offerings is a familiar idea: a well known instance is David's pouring out the water of Bethlehem *unto the Lord* (1 Chron. xi. 18); the blood of the sacrificed

bullock was to be poured out beside the altar (Exod. xxix. 12); and Jeremiah, in vii. 18, and again xliv. 17, refers to the pouring out of drink offerings to various divinities.

It is a curious and suggestive fact that in the cave, underneath this orifice, were found a number of pig bones. This seems to indicate that the cave-dwellers sacrificed the pig in their religious rites—a fact that has some bearing, probably, on the aversion with which this animal was regarded by the Semites who succeeded them in the occupation of the country. The swine was unclean (Lev. xi. 7), and Isaiah speaks with horror of eating swine's flesh (lxv. 4) and sacrificing swine's blood (lxvi. 3).

The cave-dwellers disposed of the dead by cremation. In this they were sharply

distinguished from the Semites who followed them; among the Arabs of to-day the notion of burning the body of the dead is abhorrent. (" May God burn the sinners who burn the dead," said an old Arab to me inside the great columbarium at Beit Jibrîn, on being informed of the purpose of the loculi in its sides.) Burning the dead is only twice mentioned [1] in the Old Testament, and each time in very special circumstance—in the case of the bones of Saul (1 Sam. xxxi. 12), which were burnt to save them from indignity; and in Amos vi. 10, where there is a reference to burning after a plague. But the cave-dwellers had set aside a cave as a place for cremating the bodies of their

[1] Excluding penal and sacrificial cases, such as that of Achan (Josh. vii. 25), or human victims offered as a burnt sacrifice.

deceased companions. Like most of the other caves, it is irregular and low-roofed, and has a flight of rock-cut steps giving access to it. Its entrance is shown in fig. 11. It is distinguished from the others, however, by a chimney, at the foot of which were lying heaps of calcined ashes when the cave was first opened. The greater part of the surface of the floor was strewn over with ashes of human bodies, mingled with very rude pottery of the cave-dwellers' types.

Thus the excavations enable us to form for the first time what not improbably is a fair conception of the Horites—a race which seems to have been little more than a name even to the Biblical writers.



FIG. 11.—"CREMATORIUM" OF THE CAVE-DWELLERS.

FIG. 12.—STANDING STONES OF THE HIGH PLACE OF GEZER.

THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITE

CHAPTER III

THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITE

The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full (Gen. xv. 16).

IN his address at the Annual Meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund, on 14 July, 1905, Professor George Adam Smith, reviewing the results of the excavation of Gezer, said that they were "not more illustrative in anything than "in the exhibition they afford of the "primitive religious customs which Israel "encountered upon their entry into Pales- "tine, and which persisted in the form "of idolatry and the moral abominations "which usually accompanied this up to

"the very end of the history of Israel "upon the land."

One of the most important discoveries made during the three years' campaign was that of the High Place of Gezer, the largest early Palestinian sanctuary yet unearthed. It enabled us to form a clear picture of the nature and disposition of these shrines; and from the discoveries made within its precincts it is easy to understand why, in an age of greater enlightenment, the worship of the High Place was so fiercely denounced.

The essential features of the High Place would be :—

(1) The Altar;

(2) The Standing Stones and *Ashêrah*;

(3) The Laver for ceremonial washings;

(4) The Sacred Cave;

(5) The Depository for refuse;



FIG. 13.—ALTAR FOUND AT TAANACH.

and to some extent all of these were illustrated by the discoveries at Gezer.

(1) The Altar. Nothing at all resembling a *stone* altar was discovered within the precincts of the sanctuary; but it is not necessary to suppose that the altar was a permanent structure. It is evident from all we can learn or deduce from the hints given us about early worship that simplicity was aimed at, and that the primitive altar was a mere heap of earth, or at most a pile of stones. The altars erected to Jehovah by the Israelites, before the centralization of worship at the Temple, were of this elementary description. Exodus xx. 24 prescribes that altars should be made of earth, or if of stone, that the stone should not be hewn.

In the Austrian excavation of Taanach,

an extraordinary altar was discovered of *baked earth*, ornamented with figures of animals in relief (fig. 13). Nothing like this has been found at Gezer, or indeed anywhere else; but it indicates the material of which the Gezer altar probably was made.[1]

Some distance to the south of the great row of pillar-stones presently to be described, there was a bank of earth, about 11 feet in length, through which it was excessively difficult to cut, as the earth seemed to have been baked very hard; for a long time it resisted the picks of the workmen. Embedded in this earth bank were a number of human skulls, much injured and broken; the rest of the bodies

[1] The accompanying illustration is from a photograph kindly put at the disposal of the Palestine Exploration Fund by Dr. Sellin, the director of the excavation at Taanach.

were not to be found. It is not impossible that this bank was actually the earthen altar of the High Place of Gezer. That a Canaanite altar should consist of a heap of human heads covered with earth is a new idea, though it is not inherently improbable ; for it is evident from the excavations that the Canaanites showed an Aztec-like disregard of the value of human life. With the skulls were deposited a number of cow-teeth.

(2) The Standing Stones (fig. 12) form one of the most imposing monuments that survive from ancient Palestine. They are eight in number, but there have been ten, the stumps of two which have been broken remaining at the north end. They stand in a line due north and south, and range in height from 10 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 5 inches.

They are unhewn blocks, simply set on end and supported at the base by smaller stones. Commencing with the southernmost, we may describe in order their most interesting characteristics.

The first is a gigantic pillar which cannot be encircled by less than four people clasping hands. The second is comparatively insignificant, being the smallest of the whole series. It may, however, have been the most sacred of all the stones—possibly because it was the oldest. The indication that suggests this is the existence on its top of certain smooth spots, that look exactly like the worn places polished by the kisses of devotees on stones in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and other places of pilgrimage in Palestine and elsewhere. The kissing of the images or other represen-



FIG. 14.—THE SEVENTH STONE OF THE HIGH PLACE.

tations of the divinity, such as these pillar-stones will presently be shown to be, was and is a rite common to almost all heathen worships. Compare *all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that hath not kissed him*, in 1 Kings xix. 18, and the reference in Hosea xiii. 2 to the kissing of the calf-images in the Israelite shrines.

The third and fourth stones are comparable, but inferior, in size to the great block with which the series commences. The fifth and sixth are comparatively small and insignificant. The seventh (fig. 14), which is rather larger, is of greater interest. It is the only stone of the row which differs in its composition from the rest. The other pillars were hewn from the local rock: this stone displays characteristics that show that it must have come from

some other site. A groove has been cut on its face, apparently to prevent a rope by which it was dragged from slipping. From the nature of the rock, it is possible that this stone came from Jerusalem; in that case it was probably a sacred stone that stood in the corresponding High Place of the Jebusites, which was captured, perhaps in a successful raid, and set up in the Gezer temple as a war-trophy. In this connexion it is interesting to recall the fact that the evidence of the Tell el-Amarna tablets indicates a hostility between Gezer and Jerusalem at the period of this temple; and that later, King Mesha of Moab boasts, in his triumphal inscription, of having set up just such a trophy. The passage on the inscription of Mesha is obscure, but the interpretation which seems

most probable runs thus: "The king of "Israel built for himself Ataroth, and "I fought against the town and took "it, and put to death all the people of "the town, and I removed thence the "altar-hearth (?) of Dodah (name of a "god ?), and I dragged it before Chemosh "(the Moabite god) in Kerioth." Later he says "Chemosh said to me, Take "Nebo against Israel: and I went by "night and fought against it. . . and I took "thence the altar-hearths (?) of Jehovah "and I dragged them before Chemosh." These passages seem to indicate a custom of seizing some heavy stone furniture of the holy place of a conquered town, and erecting it in the sanctuary of the conqueror. Some such custom may also explain the strange advice of Hushai to Absalom, and the latter's equally strange

acceptance of the advice (2 Sam. xvii. 13, 14). It is possible, therefore, that the stone shown in figure 14 once stood in the High Place of the Jebusites, which would no doubt have been on the Moriah where Solomon afterwards built the Temple. If with this may be identified the "land of Moriah" of Genesis xxii. 2 (which is, of course, open to doubt), it is quite admissible to believe that at the foot of this stone in its original position the author of Genesis located the attempted sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham.

The eighth stone of the series is more shapely than the rest, and is peculiar in that it stands in a hollowed stone socket. It is flanked by the stumps of the two broken pillars. These three stones are divided from the remainder by a wide interspace, no doubt with intention. Ten,

seven and three are all numbers that seem to have had a certain sanctity among the Western Semites, and cases illustrating this are not wanting in the Old Testament. We cannot enlarge on this subject at present, but must content ourselves herewith referring to the article "Number" in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.* It cannot be an accident that the *ten* stones of our High Place are divided into two groups containing *seven* and *three* respectively.

The erection of pillars like these as symbols and representatives of the divinity was a custom common to all Semitic races, not excepting, in their early stages of development, the Hebrews themselves. Jacob erected such a pillar in consecrating a place where the Lord had appeared to him, and specially named it *the House of God* (Gen. xxviii. 22). Even in the Temple

of Solomon there were two sacred pillars, named Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings vii. 21); and Hosea, picturing the Israelite captivity, says *the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without* pillar, *and without ephod, or teraphim* (Hos. iii. 4). Special charges were laid on the Israelites to destroy the pillars of the Canaanites whom they supplanted (*break in pieces their pillars:* Exod. xxiii. 24) and the erection of a pillar to Jehovah was forbidden in the Deuteronomic legislation (xvi. 22).

There can be no doubt that with the pillar there was associated an *Ashêrah*, whatever that may exactly have been. Without occupying space here in the profitless discussion of a very obscure subject, we may content ourselves with



FIG. 15.—THE LAVER.

noting that the most generally received theory is that it was a wooden pillar erected as a representative of a sacred tree. For details regarding the *ashêrah* reference may be made to the article on the subject in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary.* The Old Testament contains numerous references to the *ashêrah* (in the Authorized Version under the name "grove"). Thus, Gideon cut down the *ashêrah* beside the altar of Baal (Judg. vi. 25, 28); and in summing up the sins of the Israelites which led to the captivity, the author of the Book of Kings includes their *setting up pillars and ashêrim upon every high hill and under every green tree* (2 Kings xvii. 10), an illustration, by the way, of the tree worship from which the *ashêrah* is commonly supposed to have taken its origin.

(3) The exact position of the *ashêrah*

in the Temple of Gezer with respect to the supposed altar and the row of pillar-stones is a subject of uncertainty; for, of course, being made of timber, it would have long since perished in the damp climate of Palestine, if indeed it were not destroyed by some reformer. It was at first thought that a square block of stone beside the row of pillars (fig. 15), with a rectangular hollow cut in the top, was the socket in which the *ashêrah* stood. This may have been the case; but the probability is at least equal that this block was a laver intended for ablutions. On the whole the supposed socket appears rather too large [1] to have contained a wooden post of any likely size.

The practice of ceremonial ablution was

[1] The stone block measures 6 feet 1 inch by 5 feet by 2 feet 6 inches, and its socket 2 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 11 inches by 1 foot 4 inches.

a necessary preliminary to taking part in religious worship among the Semites, and is maintained by the modern Muhammadans as it was by the Hebrews in their own worship.[1] A similar laver was found in the Semitic temple recently investigated by Professor Petrie in the Sinai Peninsula, but in this case the brim was narrow. In the Gezer example the brim of the receptacle is broad, probably to allow of a person sitting upon it to wash his feet.

(4) The Sacred Cave was situated just east of the northern end of the row of pillar stones, and it is probable that the existence of this cave was the cause which led to the choice of the site on which the High Place was established. The cave originally consisted of two separate cham-

[1] Exod. xxx. 18–21, cf. Heb. ix. 10.

bers, each of them at one time residences of cave-dwellers, with independent entrances and probably with no internal communication between them. When discovered, however, the smaller cave was found to have been carefully closed by large blocks placed against the door inside, so that it was turned into a secret chamber. A narrow crooked tunnel was then opened between the two chambers. This tunnel was just wide enough to "wriggle" through: it was short, so that any sound made in one chamber was distinctly audible in the other; but it bent in the middle, so that it was not possible to see through it. This arrangement is evidently well suited for the giving of oracles, a boy being sent to the inner chamber before the inquirer was admitted to the outer. Far less credulity than is displayed by the

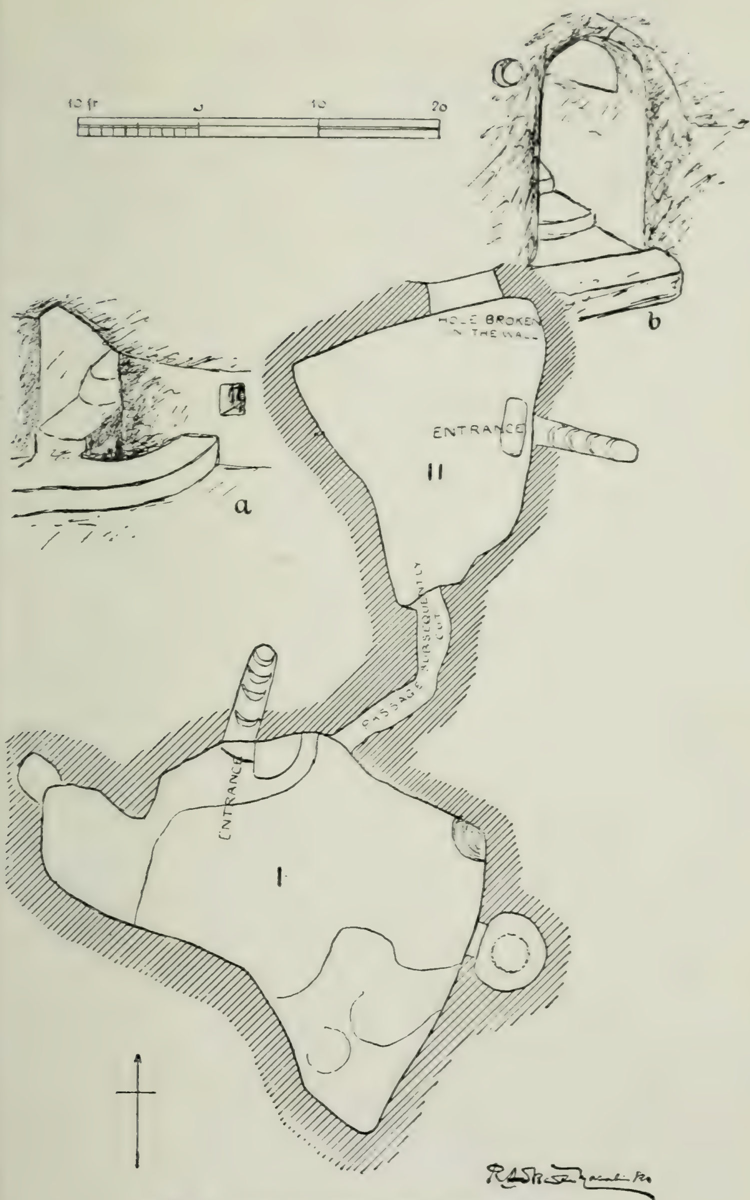


FIG. 16.—THE SACRED CAVE (GROUND-PLAN).
(*a*, Entrance to Chamber I ; *b*, Entrance to Chamber II.)

Russian pilgrims to-day in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, at the ceremony of the Holy Fire, would persuade the inquirer that in the boy's voice coming from the mouth of the narrow tunnel he actually heard the voice of the god. Of course oracle-giving, in one form or other, was an essential function of shrines over the whole ancient world. Even in Solomon's temple provision was made for an oracle (1 Kings vi. 16), though the exact details of this case are not recorded. (*See* the plan, fig 16.)

The story of Saul's visit to the witch of En-Dor is recalled to the memory by this cave. If the reader will turn to the narrative in 1 Samuel xxviii. 7–25, and study the story carefully, he will perceive that during the whole *séance* (if we may use the modernism) Saul saw nothing, but

entirely relied on the woman's vague description for the identification of Samuel: an identification which his overwrought condition made it easy for him to accept. He heard a voice, however: it has often been suggested that this may have been a case of ventriloquism practised by the pythoness (such as seems to be indicated by Isaiah viii. 19), but she may also have had a confederate stationed in some such secret chamber as has been found at Gezer. Indeed, she herself may have played the part; for the sentence in verse 21, *and the woman came unto Saul* (after he had fainted on hearing the denunciation), suggests that during his interview with the supposed spirit of Samuel he was alone. How far the Lord may have made use for His own purposes of the pretended power of the sorceress (like the "lying spirit"

of 1 Kings xxii. 22) we cannot here inquire.

(5) Lastly, there was a bell-shaped pit, resembling an ordinary cistern, a little to the east of the sacred cave and apparently a little outside the temple precincts. In this pit was found a great number of bones of human beings, cows, sheep, goats, and deer, in a confused heap. In all probability this was the receptacle into which the refuse from sacrifices was cast Such a receptacle was a necessity where-ever victims were sacrificed in worship.

Of the nature of the High Place worship Isaiah has preserved for us a vignette, in lvii. 5 and the following verses: *Are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, ye that inflame yourselves among the oaks, under every green tree: that slay the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? Among the smooth*

stones of the valley is thy portion ; they, they are thy lot : even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered an oblation. Shall I be appeased for these things? Upon a high and lofty mountain hast thou set thy bed : thither also wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. And behind the doors and the posts hast thou set up thy memorial : for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up ; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them ; thou lovedst their bed when thou sawest it. Here we have a succinct picture, obviously based on the ordinary rites of the High Place. We see the situation of the sanctuary, on the hill-top ; the tree worship ; the worship of stones, and their anointing (just as Jacob anointed the stone of Beth-el [Gen. xxviii. 18, compare xxxv. 14], and as in a similar manner



FIG. 17.—SKELETON OF A GIRL, SAWN ASUNDER.

FIG. 18.—SACRIFICED INFANT BURIED IN A JAR

the second stone of the Gezer row of pillars may have been anointed); the sacrifice of children; and the general atmosphere of licentiousness pervading the whole worship. All of these are illustrated by the Gezer High Place. We have already sufficiently alluded to the tree and stone worship, and of the last of the above features it is necessary to say no more than that the character of numerous images left there, evidently as votive offerings, testified to the immoral character of the worship.

There remains the sacrifice of children, on which a few words must be said. All round the feet of the columns, and over the whole area of the High Place, the earth was discovered to be a regular cemetery, in which the skeletons of young infants were buried. These infants were never

more than a week old. They were deposited in large jars, and with them were placed smaller jars, possibly for food for the use of the little victim in the other world. Two at least of the skeletons showed marks of fire (fig. 18).

We have here evidence of the widespread custom of devoting the firstborn ; a part of the practice whereby the firstfruits of man, of beast, and of the field, were sacred to the divinity.[1] Abraham felt an impulse to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. xxii. 1), and Mesha, king of Moab, on an occasion of emergency, sacrificed his eldest son (2 Kings iii. 27). That the ancestors of the Hebrews, like the other Semites, practised this custom may be regarded as certain, though in their earliest legislation the savagery of the

[1] See Exodus xxii. 29, 30 ; xxiii. 19.

human sacrifice is modified by the substitution of an animal victim (Exod. xiii. 13, which also prescribes substitution in the case of an animal which it was not lawful to sacrifice), or by dedication to temple service, as in the case of Samuel. The sacrifice by fire of children to Molech is prohibited in Leviticus xviii. 21 under pain of death (cf. Lev. xx. 2); but this law was disregarded by Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 3) and Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 6). The futility of such sacrifices is eloquently emphasized by Micah (vi. 7): and they were finally ended by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 10).

Outside the High Place other discoveries were made throwing a lurid light on *the iniquity of the Amorite.* One of these may be briefly alluded to here: a cistern at the bottom of which

were fourteen skeletons, one of them that of a young girl who had evidently been sawn asunder (fig. 17). The skulls of two other girls, who had been decapitated, were found at the mouth of the same cistern. Evidently some savage tragedy here took place, though of its precise nature we are ignorant. It recalls the tradition of the death of Isaiah, generally supposed to be alluded to in Hebrews xi. 37; and the treatment of the Ammonites by David (1 Chron. xx. 3).

In an enclosure close to the standing stones was found a bronze model of a cobra (fig. 14), which may have been a votive offering. It recalls the story of the brazen serpent of Moses to whose worship Hezekiah put an end (2 Kings xviii. 4). Possibly this object of worship was similar in appearance. Another very remark-

able "find" made within the precincts of the High Place was the unique figure of the "two-horned Astarte," one of the first representations of this mysterious goddess to be found (fig. 19).[1]

In closing this chapter, which is necessarily nothing more than a brief outline of a very wide subject, we may fittingly conclude with another quotation from the speech of Professor G. A. Smith, to which we referred at the beginning:—

"We realize through this work what "the purer religion of Israel had to con- "tend with through all the centuries. I "may say that we realize to a large extent "*for the first time* what it had to fight

[1] For Astarte-worship, illustrated at Gezer by a large number of terra-cotta plaques bearing the figure of the goddess in relief, compare such passages as 1 Sam. vii. 3, 4; 1 Kings xi. 33.

"with, what it had to struggle against "all that time. We have been told "that Monotheism was the natural off-"spring of desert scenery and of desert "life. But it was not in the desert "that Israel's Monotheism developed "and grew strong and reached its pure "forms. It was in this land of Palestine, "of which Gezer, with its many cent-"uries and its many forms of idolatry, "is so typical an instance. When we "contemplate all these systems, we are "surely the more amazed at the sur-"vival, under their pressure and against "their cruelty, of so much higher a spiri-"tual and an ethical religion. Surely it is "only a divine purpose, it is only the "inspiration of the Most High which "has been the cause. When we look at "these things that are seen, surely we are

" more able to appreciate than ever we " have been the clear vision which the " prophets of Israel had of the things that " are unseen, and all their valour and per- " sistence in pushing the consideration " of these upon their countrymen. Surely " we understand more than we did why " Ezra and Nehemiah were so eager and " zealous to raise the fence of the Law " against the heathenism which was bear- " ing in upon Israel from all sides, and " which overcame all other Semitic re- " ligions. And surely, last of all, we can " recognize and appreciate the valour of " the Maccabees who fought against the " last tide of heathenism, and brought " Israel through it pure, constant, and " with her Law untouched—that Israel " out of which Christ our Lord was born, " and out of which our religion has grown."

THE HOME OF REBEKAH

CHAPTER IV

THE HOME OF REBEKAH

I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in (Gen. xxiv. 24).

IN the simple life of the average rural Oriental the conditions of existence in one part of the country are much the same as those in another. The writer of the idyll in Genesis xxiv., though he may not have had Gezer in his mind, had a life not essentially different before his eyes, and to the discoveries at Gezer we may fairly look for illustrations of the various details in the picture he draws.

With Genesis xxiv. we may associate chapters xxix. to xxxi., the scene of which is laid at the same house in the next generation, when Laban had succeeded his father in the headship.

Let us follow the fortunes of the servant of Abraham in his quest of a wife for his master's son.

After a journey of which no events are recorded, he arrived at the city of Nahor, and encamped at the city well; and the daughters of the men of the city came out to draw water, as they have been doing ever since. Gezer was plentifully supplied with rock-cut cisterns and reservoirs *within* its walls at all periods of its existence; but we can hardly doubt that the Rebekahs of Gezer preferred to draw water from one or other of the series of fine living springs which surrounds the



FIG. 21.—'AIN YERDEH, THE PRINCIPAL SPRING NEAR GEZER.

hill (fig. 21), when no enemy was at the gates to prevent access to them.

The well, as appears from chapter xxix. 3, was somewhat different from the wells now found in and around Gezer, being protected by a large stone, too great for the daughter of Laban to move unaided, though not too great for Jacob's strength. It was probably intended to prevent sheep from falling down the shaft. In modern Palestine, honeycombed as it is with disused wells and caves, many pits and holes which no longer serve any useful purpose are in the same way stopped with large stones to prevent danger to man or beast. From Genesis xxiv. 16 it would appear that there were steps descending to the water.

As the servant of Abraham waited at the well, Rebekah came out with her

pitcher on her shoulder. And here I am tempted for a moment to digress, and, with this incident as an illustration, suggest a caution against a too literal interpretation of the common phrase "the changeless East." Granting freely that nothing helps to a clear understanding of the Biblical narratives better than an observant journey through Palestine (though the traveller who takes the usual hurried run over the country under the guidance of a dragoman makes his pilgrimage under the worst possible conditions for deriving profit therefrom), it must yet be remembered that visitors to the country, and popular authors, are too apt to treat the Bible as the literally exact picture of a modern Oriental life lived in a remote past. They forget that a sure, if slow, progress influences the East



FIG. 22.—WATER-POTS FOUND IN ANCIENT CISTERNS.

as certainly as everywhere else. I have often seen travellers pointing out a venerable village elder engaged in ploughing, and light-heartedly identifying him with Abraham or Isaac, quite forgetful of these facts—first, that those semi-nomadic patriarchs were purely pastoral, and quite likely never held a plough in their hands: secondly, that they were strangers, sojourning among a people whose rites and beliefs were those which we have endeavoured to sketch in the preceding chapter, and that to them no other form of society was known; whereas the sheikh has himself come under the profoundly modifying influence of Islam, and his country is surrounded by Christian lands, and is open to the continual importation of the products of western civilization.

Rebekah carried her pitcher on her

shoulder. The modern Rebekah would certainly balance her pitcher on her head, quite unconscious that she was displaying an ingenuity that a trick performer in a circus would find profitable.[1] Moreover, Rebekah's pitcher would be smaller than that of her present-day representative. Clearly Rebekah applied her pitcher directly to the source of the water-supply, and therefore required to have a vessel which it would be within her strength to carry up the steps of the well when full. The Rebekahs of ancient Gezer evidently lowered water-pots of earthenware by ropes tied to the handles ; these handles often broke, so that the mutilated pots remained in the bottom of

[1] I have seen a woman pick up a stone and throw it at a boy who annoyed her, without removing a full pitcher of water from her head.



FIG. 23.—STONE TROUGH FROM A CISTERN MOUTH.

the cistern for the benefit of the explorer (fig. 22). No large jars were found inside the cisterns: it would be quite impossible for the women to draw these up when full of water, even if they could be drawn up at all without breakage. Indeed, to judge from the general results of the excavation, large jars, such as are now carried to the wells, are by no means so common as they would be were we to excavate a modern village; and when they are found it is usually as receptacles for grain, not for water.

The modern Gezerite girl carries to the well her large water-jar, and in addition a smaller bucket: either a skin bag, distended at the mouth by two cross pieces of wood, or an adaptation of a Russian petroleum tin. This she lowers into the well by a long rope, and by successive dippings fills her jar. Her arms are com-

paratively weak, and she is generally unable to lift the full jar to her head without the help of one of her associates ; but the carrying power of her neck muscles, and the power of her scalp to resist compression, are astonishing, and she is quite prepared to carry the heavy weight of the water, once it is placed on her head, a very long distance if necessary.

Rebekah, however, had no bucket, and made her successive journeys to the well with the water-jar itself. Abraham's servant, on seeing her, desired a drink, and this she gave, drawing likewise for his camels—thereby unconsciously fulfilling the test whereby the servant was to know Isaac's chosen bride. In modern Palestine the universal necessity of water is so constantly recognized that only the most churlish Rebekah would refuse the ser-



FIG. 24.—LARGE JAR FROM A GRANARY AT GEZER.

vant's request for a drink himself; but she would probably expect some acknowledgment of her services, if called upon to provide water for the stranger's ten camels.

She poured the water into the troughs which surrounded the mouth of the well. Such cattle troughs are found at every well-mouth in Palestine, and they are almost always evidently very ancient. They were also found sometimes at cistern mouths in Gezer. These are simply great blocks of stone, hollowed out to form a receptacle for the water (fig. 23).

As Rebekah watered the camels the servant watched her (of course he would not help her, any more than it would occur to a modern man of the East to do so: drawing water is essentially woman's work, and there is a feeling that it is to some extent derogatory for a grown man,

if there be a woman or boy available). Having satisfied himself that she was in very truth the destined bride for his master's son, he gave her presents—a nose-ring (compare ver. 47) and bracelets of gold—too precious to be considered a mere *bakhshîsh* for her trouble in watering the camels.

There is no datum whereby we can decide the probable pattern of the ornaments given to Rebekah, nor have any such objects in gold come down to us from the excavation. The various lootings to which the city was subjected by Egyptians, Hebrews, Assyrians and others, were so thorough that very little of the precious metal was left. Two or three specimens from among the fairly common bronze ornaments are shown on a later page, and it is at least not impossible that the

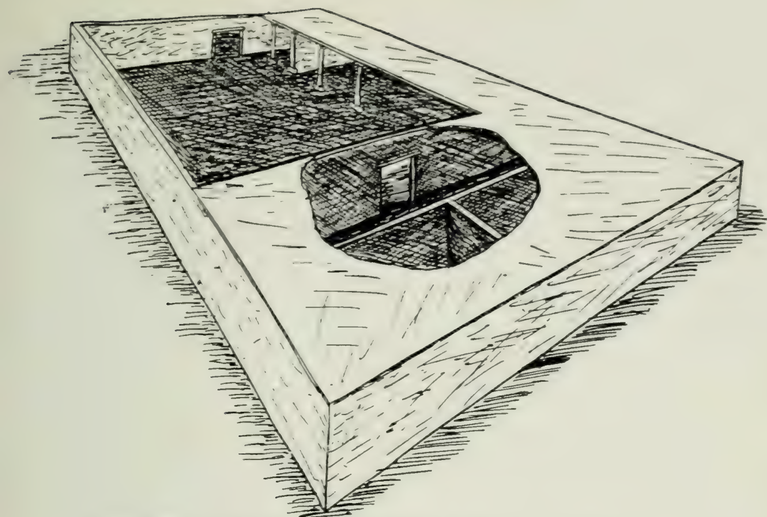


FIG. 25.—DIAGRAM OF A GEZERITE HOUSE, RESTORED.
(Part of the roof is broken away to show the internal partitions.)

FIG. 26.—LAMP IN FORM OF A BIRD.

presents given by Abraham's messenger were of similar type.

Then he asked after her family, and she answered in the words selected as a motto for the present chapter. She told the servant that theirs was a house large enough to receive him and his camels, and that in their granary there was enough food for the latter.

The camel food mentioned by Rebekah was no doubt that given by the ancient Gezerites to their camels, and still used for the same purpose by the modern inhabitants of Palestine. The food of these animals is a mixture of *tibn*, or straw chopped finely, and *kursenni*, a species of pea or vetch. A large number of ancient granaries were found in the course of the excavation at Gezer: these had been destroyed by fire, and the grain, pre-

served from decay by charring, retained its form so as to be at once recognized. Among the grains found in these granaries were large stores of *kursenni*, and when *kursenni* was present in a granary it was of this grain that the largest quantity was stored, as though indicating that it was meant for the animal that required the most nourishment. When *kursenni* was found there were almost always remains of charred *tibn* found also, so that these Gezerite granaries, like that of Bethuel, had both straw and camels' provender. The grain was usually stored in large jars, such as that shown in fig. 24.

So Rebekah, with her news and her freshly acquired treasures, went to her home; and when Laban, her brother, saw the gold—a picturesque touch, anticipatory of the later developments of

Laban's character, as mirrored in the story of his dealings with Jacob—he ran out to welcome the donor of these gifts.

To what manner of house was Abraham's servant thus made welcome? This question can only be answered generally; for it is evident from the excavations that each man built his house according to his own fancy and requirements, without regard to uniformity with the dwellings of his neighbours. We can, however, without going far wrong, picture Laban guiding his guest from the well outside the city through the gates into a labyrinth of narrow crooked alleys, all much like one another, having on each side high blank walls rudely built of stones set and faced with mud, broken only by doorways. At one of these doorways Laban would pause and usher his

visitor through into an open court. On one side a series of penthouse sheds, supported by wooden columns standing on rude blocks of stone, afforded a shade under which the lord of the house could sit in the hot summer days and sleep in the warm summer nights. In this court the camels would be ungirded, and probably their master would sleep in the sheds above mentioned, so as to be near them. A door in the back wall of the court would give admission to the house itself—a group of three or four small chambers separated by cross walls and covered by a flat roof. (*See* fig. 25.) No evidence was found that any of the Gezerite houses had an upper storey. One of the rooms would be set apart as a granary and store-room : here the straw and provender, as well as the family's own supply of corn, etc., would



FIG. 19.—FIGURE OF THE "TWO-HORNED ASTARTE."

FIG. 20.—BAKING OVEN.

be kept. That the women were separated from the men, as is usual in Oriental households, is indicated by Rebekah's telling her news to "her mother's house" (ver. 28), and the fact that Rebekah had to be called (ver. 57) when the negotiations concerning her were finished.

It would be easy to fill in the picture by a description of furniture and ornaments, based on an inventory of the chattels of a modern well-to-do Palestinian peasant; and scores of such idealistic reconstructions have from time to time been written and published. This is both profitless and misleading. Let me illustrate my meaning by a concrete case, which might be multiplied by hundreds. My friend, Ahmed Ali, head man of the village of Zakarîya, has in his house, among other things, a glass mirror,

a coffee pot and cups, cigarettes, a large chest with an iron lock which if opened rings an alarm bell, a gun, iron knives and pots, and pewter spoons. For all I know, he may also have a watch, like others of his kind. On the other hand, he professes a religion which makes it a deadly sin for any representations of the human figure to be about the premises. Laban had none of those conveniences, for they had not been invented, and iron was unknown to him; but that he had images we know, for Rachel stole them (Gen. xxxi. 19). If then the principal objects in the respective houses of Laban and Ahmed Ali be so dissimilar, it is unwise to institute any comparison between the two establishments. We have no guarantee that the fashion in perishable articles—textiles and wooden objects



FIG. 27.—STONE QUERN.



FIG. 28.—CORN GRINDER.

—has not changed quite as much as in the case of the articles which are durable. Ahmed's pottery, for example, is quite unlike that which must have been used by Laban; we therefore cannot assume that Ahmed's clothing and his wooden utensils are any less unlike those of Rebekah's household.

I would repeat that I am not depreciating the study of modern Palestine for the purposes of Biblical illustration—indeed, I regard it as a first essential. I am merely putting in a plea for discrimination and caution; and in endeavouring to reconstruct Laban's home as it appeared to Abraham's servant, I feel that it is necessary to put aside all reminiscences of modern Palestine. As a consequence of this the picture will necessarily be incomplete; for as it is impossible

that any antiquities of perishable material could survive the damp earth and climate of Palestine, we cannot tell what appearance the furniture made of such materials may have presented.

Leaving these out of consideration therefore, let us inquire what other objects might have met the eye of Abraham's servant when he visited the house of Laban.

Of objects in daily use the most important group would be the pottery, of which material a larger proportion of the cooking and other domestic vessels would be made than would now be the case. Pottery then took a place now to a large extent usurped, even in Palestine, by iron, copper, tin, and china. Beside the waterpot from which the servant had drunk at the well, there would be also



FIG. 29.—BRONZE SPEAR-HEADS, ETC.

large jars for storage of grain and possibly oil; cylindrical stands in which these round-bottomed vessels were kept upright; cooking pots in great variety; small milk jugs and other drinking vessels; lamps, perhaps in fantastic animal forms (fig. 26); small pots for ointment; and (if the household included young children, a point on which we have no information) small earthenware models of animals used as toys. It is highly improbable that there was any written document on the premises, or that, if there were, any member of the household would be able to read it. But if this had been so, no doubt the writing would be impressed in cuneiform characters on an earthenware tablet like that already described and illustrated in the second chapter. When meat was set before

Abraham's servant, no doubt it was cooked in an earthenware pot and served on earthenware dishes, accompanied by bread baked on an earthenware tray. Ahmed Ali's wife would cook meat for his guests in a copper pot, serve it in wooden dishes—with a concession to European prejudices in the shape of a spoon—and accompany it with pancake-like flat loaves of bread baked on an iron tray.

The bread might, however, be baked in an oven not dissimilar to that now used —a cylinder of brick with a movable cover, inside which the thin loaves are spread; outside a hot fire is heaped. Great numbers of remains of such ovens were found all through the excavation (fig 20).

A stone corn-grinder would be an

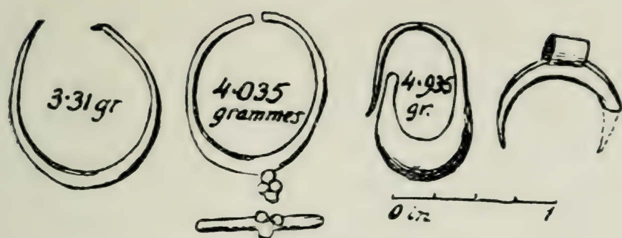


FIG. 30.—GOLD EAR-RINGS.

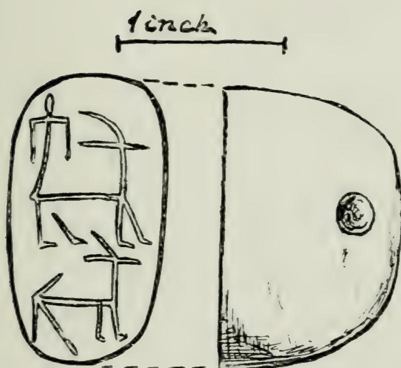


FIG. 31.—LIMESTONE SEAL.


FIG. 32.—STONE AMULETS.

essential. It would probably consist of a long rectangular table of stone, slightly hollowed in its upper surface, with a movable stone suitable for grasping and rubbing backwards and forwards (fig. 28). The well-known rotary hand quern, such as is in constant use at present in Palestine, would be quite unknown or else in a very rudimentary form (fig 27).

The metal used by Laban would be bronze; though he might still employ sharp flint chips, as was done in Gezer down to the time of the captivity, for rough purposes. Of bronze, however, would be his knives, and the arrow points and spear-heads with which he hunted, or protected his household and flocks from enemies or wild beasts (fig. 29). To make new arrow-heads he would require a mould of stone.

Besides their clothing, concerning which

we can say nothing definite, the whole household no doubt wore ornaments of one kind or another upon their persons: such might be finger and toe rings, and bracelets of bronze, silver, or gold; hairpins of these materials or of ivory; pendants of various kinds; nose-rings (from Gen. xxiv. 47 we gather that a nose-ring was one of the gifts to Rebekah), and beads of coloured stone. (*See* figs. 30, 34.) Laban no doubt was provided with a seal bearing some device distinguishing his family. (*See* fig. 31.) It is highly probable that they shared with almost every human being in the East that irrational and degrading superstition, belief in the evil eye (Deut. xxviii. 54, 56); and that they wore in consequence amulets for their protection (fig 32). Such an amulet might be a small pendant of slate, a fragment of

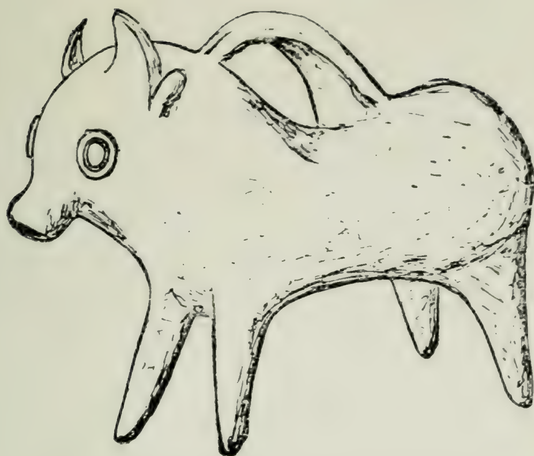


FIG. 33.—FIGURE OF THE COW DIVINITY.

1 2 3 4 5 6

FIG. 34.—BRONZE PIN AND BROOCHES.

coral, a small enamelled figure from Egypt, or a variety of other things. Probably the apparently ornamental rings themselves were of the nature of amulets, as they are coupled with "strange gods" in Genesis xxxv. 4. For other superstitions practised in the household of Laban, compare the mandrake story, chapter xxx. 14.

Lastly, we may mention the images, the representations of the household gods, of which we hear in the story of Rachel. These, as we have learnt from the ruined Canaanite house already described on p. 13, were suspended on the wall. They were probably small human or even animal figures, or else plaques of terra-cotta stamped in low relief with a symbolic figure of the tutelary deity (fig. 35), to whose protection and influence the family looked

for good fortune in their daily life and relationships. A great variety of household gods was found in the excavations.

It may be objected to the foregoing chapter that the household we have been describing was purely Palestinian, whereas Laban was a native of Mesopotamia. This no doubt is true. But when the stories of Laban and his sister and daughters are read carefully, it is clear that though located in Mesopotamia they have, in the mind of the inspired author and the public for whom he was more immediately writing, a Palestinian setting; and it is to Palestine rather than to Mesopotamia we must look to fill in the outlines that he has so boldly drawn.

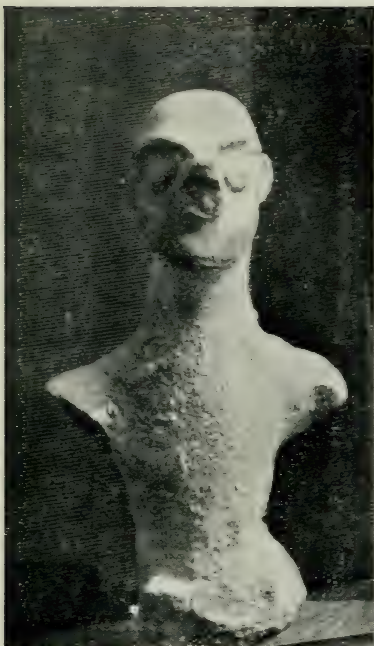


FIG. 35.—A "HOUSEHOLD GOD."



FIG. 36.—THE "TONGUE OF GOLD."

THE GOLDEN CALF

CHAPTER V

THE GOLDEN CALF

This is thy God, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (Exod. xxxii. 4, marginal reading).

WHEN Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the impatient people applied to Aaron, his brother, for guidance. That a new covenant was being made for them they were aware, but "the manner of their god" was as unknown to them at the moment as it was, centuries afterwards, to the mixed multitude of Babylonians and Cuthahites and Sepharvites that the king of Assyria established in the despoiled land of Sa-

maria (2 Kings xvii. 24). If we take the account of Exodus as we find it, it appears that the stringent law of the Ten Words had not yet been publicly taught to the people, or at any rate that they had not comprehended its public announcement. Exodus xx. 18, 19 seems to show that they were too bewildered and terrified by the theophany to realize the meaning of anything they might hear. Moses was on his way down, with the tables in his hands, when he discovered what had taken place in his absence.

Aaron accepted the responsibility—indeed such a responsibility had been expressly delegated to him, according to Exodus xxiv. 14; and in ignorance, it would appear, that henceforth the use of symbolic images was to be forbidden, he made a calf of gold, round which, as he

proclaimed, a feast of *Jehovah*—not of any foreign or traditional cow-divinity—was to be held. The ceremonies evidently partook of the character of one of the merry-making vintage or harvest festivals common in all primitive societies—a day of feasting and merry-making, not unmixed with licence.

In view of the spiritual development to which the worship of Jehovah was, by divine guidance, ultimately led, it is not easy at first sight to believe that this act of Aaron and his followers was not a mere lapse into idolatry, such as stained Solomon, Ahaz, and other later leaders of the people; but rather an outburst of the natural religious feelings and traditions of the as yet untaught tribes, who, in worshipping their own god, were following the immemorial observances of their Semitic

kinsmen. To an untutored pastoral or agricultural community the strongest force familiar in the daily routine of life is the strength of a powerful young bull, and it seems clear that, half symbolically, half materially, the primitive Semites pictured their tribal divinity under some such bodily form.

It might have been expected that the sharp judgment which the error of Aaron and the people incurred would have eradicated these traces of natural religion from their minds; yet, so tenacious is religious convervatism, a strikingly parallel incident took place some three hundred years later. Jeroboam, fearing lest his successful revolt against the house of Solomon should be counteracted by influences brought to bear on his subjects at Jerusalem, the central shrine of the united

monarchy, resolved to erect shrines inside his own territory in order to divert the stream of worshippers from the land of his rival. One of these he placed at Dan, probably with the intention of setting up an attraction as far removed from Jerusalem as the limits of his kingdom permitted. The other he established at Beth-El, thereby not only reviving an important holy place that had long been traditionally connected with the worship of Jehovah, but erecting a barrier on the high road to Jerusalem which could not fail to intercept pilgrims who might still desire to visit the authorized centre of the national religion (1 Kings xii. 25–33).

Now these shrines were in no sense heathen temples. The feasts and sacrifices were modelled on those of Jerusalem (1 Kings xii. 32), and the shrine was, in

its way, as much a place of Jehovah-worship as was that of Jerusalem; but the central object of adoration at each shrine was a calf of gold, exactly like the symbolical representation of Jehovah that Aaron had made in the wilderness.

These passages seem to show that however lofty and spiritual the conception of Jehovah may have been to the prophets, yet the common people of Israel retained a materialistic conception of Him, derived from an age-long tradition, which it needed the cleansing fires of the captivity wholly to destroy; and that from time to time leaders pandered to this popular conception, in order to secure popular favour.

It is an interesting fact in this connexion that one of the commonest types of objects found in the excavation was a

pottery model of a cow, generally rudely formed, but always recognizable (fig. 33). A good example is shown in the accompanying figure. It is impossible to explain the prevalence of such models otherwise than on the hypothesis that they had a religious significance, and were the god-figures of the families who dwelt in the houses where they were found.

The worship at these shrines included sacrifice, incense-burning (1 Kings xiii. 1), and kissing the images of the deity (Hos. xii. 2), just as we have seen that the standing stone in the High Place of Gezer was probably kissed. The shrines themselves were probably not unlike that of Gezer: in the denunciation of Hosea (x. 1–6) altars and pillars are enumerated with the calves.

It is often supposed that these calves

were modelled on the sacred bulls worshipped in Egypt ; but this cannot be so. In the first place, the Egyptian bull was always a living incarnation of the deity, never a dead image ; it was not worshipped for itself, but for the god that quickened it. In the second place, Aaron could not have said that an *Egyptian* god had spoiled Egyptian territory. In the third place, Jeroboam would not have done anything so impolitic as to introduce a foreign god upon Israelite soil at so critical a moment of his career.

The prophets of Israel had more to contend against than the influences of foreign worship, so graphically portrayed in the passage we have already quoted from Professor G. A. Smith. Our wonder at the prophets and their teaching is the more increased when we realize that they

came from, and were sent to, a people who had formed no higher conception of their Deity than that of a Being endowed with the strength and even the form of a bull-calf.

ACHAN'S SPOIL

CHAPTER VI

ACHAN'S SPOIL

A goodly Babylonish mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight (Josh. vii. 21).

THESE articles are enumerated as having been stolen from the spoil of Jericho by Achan.

Of the first, the Babylonish or Shinar mantle, we can say nothing, such an article being too perishable to last. The most natural and probable conjecture is that it was a cloak decorated with the embroidery for which Babylon was famous. Nor is there any definite inform-

ation about the two hundred shekels' weight of silver.

Of the gold "wedge" more of interest can be said. The Hebrew word translated "wedge" literally means "tongue." Now, in a stratum which was approximately contemporary with Joshua two gold ingots were found; one of them a bar whose weight was not far from fifty shekels[1]—the weight of the ingot stolen by Achan. Its shape was long, narrow and slightly curved; it might well be described as a "tongue," and it is probably similar to Achan's prize (*see* fig. 36).

It may be guessed with reasonable likelihood that into such tongue-like bars

[1] That is the heavy Babylonian shekel of 252$\frac{2}{3}$ grains. Fifty such shekels would be 12,633$\frac{1}{3}$ grains. The actual weight of the ingot is 860 grammes, or 13,244 grains.

trade gold was beaten for commerce; possibly with such bars the various commercial negotiations in which the patriarchs took part were transacted.

The original ingot from Gezer has, of course, with the rest of the antiquities, been delivered over to the Turkish authorities in accordance with Ottoman law. A gilt cast is, however, to be seen in the museum of the Palestine Exploration Fund in London.

THE DEATH OF SAMSON

CHAPTER VII

THE DEATH OF SAMSON

He bowed himself with all his might: and the house fell (Judg. xvi. 30).

WE are familiar with pictures in which an attempt is made to represent this graphic scene. That of Hoet, often reproduced in popular illustrated Bibles, may be taken as a typical specimen. Here Samson, in the foreground, is snapping across two gigantic stone columns. In the background are colonnades of arches and a confused mass of beams, stones, and human beings falling from above.

Now quite apart from the obvious

architectural impossibilities of such a conception—the pillars and arches being of a style that did not come into existence for centuries after Samson's time—we are confronted by difficulties in the story which the picture does not give any help in clearing up.

The course of the story is as follows: The Philistines on the feast of Dagon, their god, brought Samson, a fettered captive, to their temple with a triumph song. The stately rendering of the English Bible—*Our god hath delivered into our hand our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which hath slain many of us*—rather misses the point of their words. They are really a rustic improvised rhyme, no doubt sung by alternating groups of the Philistines—the one giving out words and tune, the other repeating them, all

to an accompaniment of hand-clapping and joyous cries, such as may still be heard at any Palestinian village merry-making. Something of the rude rhyme and rhythm may be preserved if we render it in such a way as this :—

Our god has given us, into our hand,
　　The foe of our land,
Whom even our most powerful band
Was never able to withstand.

Then, with feats of strength and buffoonery, they compelled him to give them amusement. When they had tired him out they suffered him to rest—this is the force of his request to be allowed to *lean upon* the pillars (ver. 26)—no doubt in order that he might gain strength to continue the sport. Samson took the opportunity, and depriving the house of

its support, destroyed himself and his persecutors in one catastrophe.

Three problems present themselves in dealing with this narrative. The first is the disposition of the spectators; the second is the construction of the house; the third is the actual procedure of Samson.

(1) There was a great crowd of men and women upon the roof of the house: three thousand is the number given, which need not be pressed as meaning anything more definite than a very large and unusual concourse. But also the house itself was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. We are thus led to inquire how a large assembly outside and another inside could at the same time watch the sports of Samson. This is possible in

two ways only—either Samson was inside the temple and there was a large hole in the roof (like the " hypaethrum " of some Greek temples) through which the people above watched ; or else he was outside, and the lower crowd were accommodated in a portico. There can be no question that the last theory is preferable. On the former hypothesis evidently only those who were immediately at the edge of the supposed roof-opening could see Samson's feats at all, and even these could only have had an unsatisfactory bird's-eye view of them ; moreover, there is no evidence for roof-openings in such buildings in Palestine at that early date, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to devise a house so constructed that it would fall if two near pillars were removed. The hole in the roof would

require for the support of its boundaries a larger number of pillars surrounding it, and only a little local damage would be done.

We therefore prefer to picture Samson as being in the open air; and with this as a fundamental hypothesis, certain details fit into their places naturally. We can see the crowd of "common people" sent up to the roof of a large, deep portico, while in the portico itself, and thus under a grateful shade, though yet in the cool of the open air, were the lords of the Philistines and their satellites and harems. Samson was no doubt in a forecourt of the temple. There is another point that is confirmatory of this view of the story. Unless the conception that has been formed of Oriental temples is altogether erroneous, the inside of the temple of

Dagon would be (*a*) too dark and (*b*) too sacred for any other than the priests to enter.

When Samson was weary they led him to rest in the most natural place possible —just inside the portico, where he would gain some benefit from the shade: not too near the haughty lords to inconvenience them, but yet near enough that they could satisfy any curiosity about his person that they might entertain. And this leads me to the second problem, the construction of the house.

(2) It has already been remarked that if we are to suppose the house with a roof-opening, it is difficult to see how it could have been constructed. The case is different on the portico theory. A portico of any but the smallest size would require at least one pillar, and

probably more, to support it. If that pillar were taken away the portico would fall.

A structure not unlike a Greek temple in essence, with two pillars in front, would answer all the requirements of the story. When Samson took away the support of the two pillars, the lords below were crushed by the fall of the portico roof, and those who were on the portico were also killed by the fall. It is evident that the greatest weight of the crowd would be in front, pressing forward to see the feats of the captive. It is also evident that the roof of the temple itself might remain intact, and those who were so fortunate as to be seated there would escape, though there would no doubt be a panic that would cause deaths other than those due directly to the fall. There is no special

reason to suppose that the whole of the three thousand on the roof were destroyed.

(3) There remains, however, the question, what exactly did Samson do? And here archaeology, while confirming the two preceding conclusions, enables us to complete our picture of the scene by affording information upon this point not elsewhere obtainable.

In the course of the excavation, in a stratum some three hundred years older than the time of Samson, was found a building which answered the required conditions of the story to a remarkable extent. That it was a temple of some sort was indicated by religious emblems found within its precincts, and by a waste-pit full of sheep-bones, apparently those of sacrificial victims. The building was

much ruined, only the foundations remaining; but enough was left to enable us to restore it with a considerable degree of probability. (*See* the Frontispiece.)

We see a forecourt, with a row of four column-bases [1] separating it from a paved area. Unfortunately the temple itself was quite destroyed; but the column bases, the essential architectural element, remained. Such column-bases were very commonly found in the course of the excavation. (*See* fig. 37: compare also the portico of the house in fig. 25.) They are all rude blocks of stone very few of them being dressed in any way. They are roughly flattened on the upper surface, but are not prepared

[1] The row of column-bases will be found just above the girl carrying a basket in the foreground. The man stooping is standing in the forecourt.



FIG. 37.—FOUNDATIONS OF A HOUSE, SHOWING COLUMN BASES.

by chiselling for worked pillars of stone. Moreover, anything resembling stone pillars or pillar drums are of the rarest possible occurrence. It is in fact certain that these bases were meant for the support, not of stone pillars, but of vertical posts of wood, like the *cedar pillars* of Solomon's house, 1 Kings vii. 2; and were intended to prevent their comparatively narrow ends from sinking into the ground under the pressure of whatever weight they had to bear.

If we picture this Gezer temple, and like it the temple of Dagon at Gaza, as having a portico supported by four wooden pillars [1] we can get rid at once of the monstrous conception of Samson snapping

[1] The expression *the two middle pillars* in ver. 29 probably indicates that there were not less than four pillars in the portico of the Dagon temple, as in that of Gezer.

two great stone pillars to which artists have accustomed us. Nor is there anything in the Bible to warrant such a conception. On the contrary, the whole description of Samson's feat points to the action that would be necessary in pushing or pulling a wooden beam so that its foot would slide over a stone at the base. *He took hold of the two middle pillars and leaned upon them—and he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell.* The words evidently denote a sudden impulse producing a slight displacement of the pillars, which would then fall of themselves. To adopt this reading of the story in no way detracts from the glory of Samson's strength and achievements. It brings the story into the region of the possible: but it does not take it out of the region of the marvellous.

THE CITY WALLS



FIG. 38.—PORTION OF THE TWO CITY WALLS.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CITY WALLS

The cities are great and fenced up to heaven (Deut. i. 28).

NOTHING illustrates the size and strength of the Canaanite cities so much as a study of the walls with which they were fenced; and in examining the city walls of Gezer it is easy to understand why the spies, accustomed to the simple camp life of the desert, were appalled by the prospect of attacking a people so powerful.

Gezer was surrounded by two great walls, not, however, of the same date, the one having been built outside the line

of the other when the latter had fallen into disuse and ruin (fig. 38). This took place about 1450 B.C., so that the outer city wall is the more interesting for us at present, concerned as we are now with the illustrations of the Biblical story afforded by the excavation. The older wall belongs to a period that the Biblical history of Palestine does not directly touch.

Even in its present ruined form the outer city wall is an imposing structure. In places it still stands to a height of from 10 to 14 feet, and these can hardly be regarded as being much more than the underground foundations. The outer face of the city wall, towering above the hill on which the city was built, may well have seemed impregnable to the messengers of Moses.

Nor would they feel any more encour-



FIG. 39.—BASTION OF BACCHIDES.

aged when they contemplated the breadth of this massive structure. It is 14 feet in thickness. When complete, two ordinary cars could have been driven abreast round its top with the greatest ease.

At intervals round the outer walls of Gezer there are towers, thirty in number. These towers, as a study of the masonry shows, were inserted in the wall after the original structure was built, and probably indicate a refortification of the city. It is not unlikely that they belong to the restoration by Solomon mentioned in 1 Kings ix. 16.

In this connexion it is interesting to notice that there is one part of the wall itself which is of similar masonry to these supposed Solomonic towers. It almost appears as though the wall had here been breached and repaired, and

that to strengthen it the towers had at the same time been built. It is quite within the bounds of probability that here Pharaoh breached the city wall when he captured Gezer, and gave it for his daughter's wedding portion.

Later, in the Book of Maccabees (1 Macc. ix. 52) we learn that Bacchides, the general of the Syrian army, fortified the city. His fortification has been found in a series of six great bastions built at intervals along the walls. These bastions encase and strengthen the older towers, as is shown in the accompanying photographic plates (figs. 39, 40).

This short description has been included in the present work to show that we may often expect to find, in the actual buildings unearthed, tangible traces of the direct influence of recorded historical

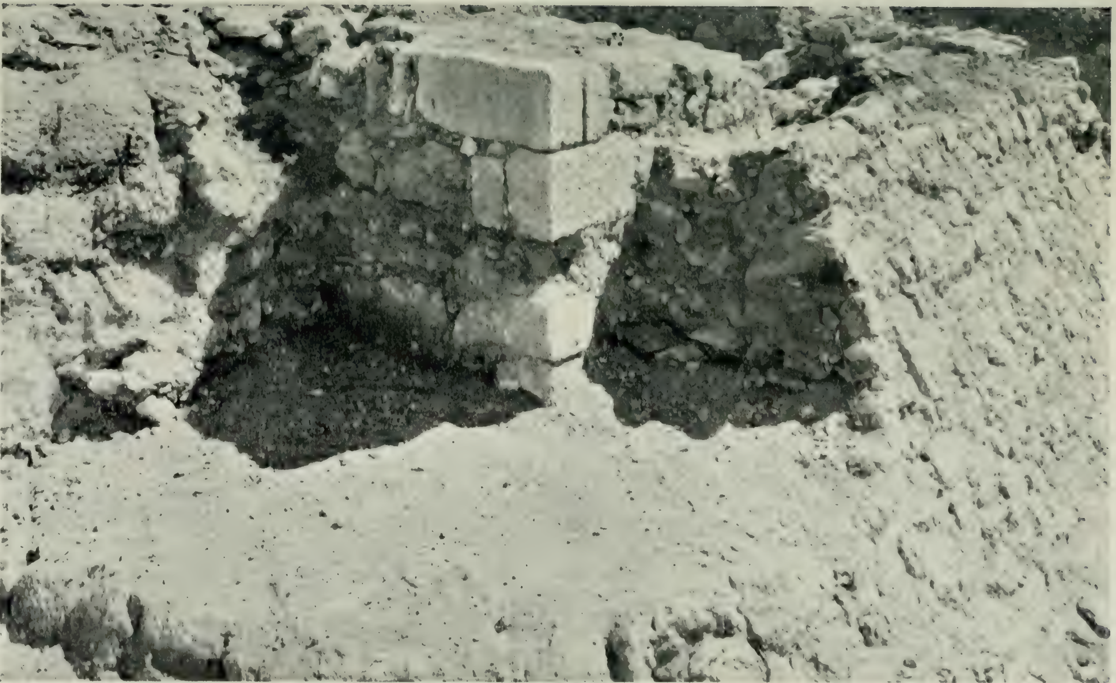


FIG. 40.—THE SAME BASTION, WITH A CORNER REMOVED TO EXPOSE THE SOLOMONIC TOWER.

events. By excavation we can be brought into personal contact with Biblical heroes, and can see and touch structures which they built and inhabited.

THE CRAFTSMEN OF JUDAH

CHAPTER IX

THE CRAFTSMEN OF JUDAH

The records are ancient. These were the potters and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah : there they dwelt with the king for his work (1 Chron. iv. 22, 23).

IN the last chapter we briefly illustrated how excavation can illustrate the Biblical *history*. In this we shall bring forward a striking instance of the light it throws on the Biblical *text* and its interpretation.

The second, third and fourth chapters of 1 Chronicles, containing the genealogy of the tribe of Judah, have long been recognized as a passage of peculiar difficulty.

The names seem to have suffered in copying, and their mutual connexion is not clear. Moreover, some of the names being those of cities—Hebron, Ziph, Eshtemoa, Gedor and the rest—it had become a matter of agreement among critics, unable to explain these as genealogies of men, that the passage is rather to be treated as a genealogy of tribes and communities; and that when, for example, we read in chapter ii. 42 "Mareshah, the father "of Hebron," we are not to understand a genealogical relationship between two men. but a statement that the town of Hebron was inhabited by a colony from the town of Mareshah at some unknown period of history. This interpretation, though generally received as being the most satisfactory, is involved in an inextricable tangle of anachronisms and discrepancies;

and it was admitted that for the full understanding of these difficult chapters more light from the monuments must be awaited.

Though desired, this light was hardly expected; yet it has come from recent excavations, and we now know something definite of the proper names mentioned in the genealogy. We know that the names are those of men, not of cities; we know the period at which they lived; we know that the genealogy is a definite record of physical relationship, not a vague catalogue of migrations of communities; and we are in a position to check the successive errors of copyists, which have made the passage obscure. These errors exist, but they are by no means so wide and far-reaching as had been supposed.

The section on which a bright light has been thrown is more especially 1 Chron. iv. 16–23. The sources which are at our disposal for correcting the Hebrew text are two-fold—the Greek version, commonly called the Septuagint, which was made from a Hebrew text earlier than that which we now possess; and a series of jar-handles bearing names and devices stamped upon them, which have been discovered in recent excavations.

It is impossible here to enter fully into the technical details of the corrections of scribal errors in this passage which these independent sources of information enable us to make. They have been fully discussed in a paper by the present writer, "The Craftsmen's Guild of the Tribe of "Judah," published in the Palestine Exploration Fund *Quarterly Statement* for

1905, pp. 243, 328. Their nature can best be shown by exhibiting the passage in parallel columns, showing the renderings of the existing Hebrew text, and the corrected text; alterations in the latter are indicated by italics.

Hebrew Text	Corrected Text
And the sons of Jehallelel; Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. And the sons of Ezrah; Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon: and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. And his wife the Jewess bare Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh,	And the sons of *Jerahmeel*; Ziph, and *Ezrah*, Tiria, and Asarel. And the sons of Ezrah; Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon: *and Ezrah had another wife whose name was Miriam, and Miriam* bare Shammai, and *Shebaniah* the father of Eshtemoa. And his wife *Ha-Jehudijah* bare Jered the father of Gedor, and *Hebron* the father of *Soco*, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these are the sons of

which Mered took. And the sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, were the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. And the sons of Shimon; Amnon, and Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi; Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth. The sons of Shelah the son of Judah; Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba; and Joash, and Saraph, who had dominion in Moab, and Jeshubi-lehem. And the records are ancient. These were the potters, and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah:

the scarabaeus, which they adopted in apostasy. And the sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, were *Dalilah the father of Keilah, and Shimon the father of Amnon, and Menahem* the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Ashtemoa the Maacathite. And the sons of Shimon; Amnon, and Rinah, *Abd-hadad,* and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi; Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth. The sons of Shelah the son of *Hodiad*; Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of *Micah*, and the families of the house of *Obed-Thebez,* of the house of Ashbea, and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba, and *Joab son of Seraiah* who had dominion in Moab *and returned to Beth-Lehem.* And the

there they dwelt with the king for his work.	records are ancient. These were the potters, and the inhabitants of Netaim and *Gedor*: there they dwelt with the king *on his property*.

It may fairly be claimed that of these two columns the corrected text is the more coherent. A genealogical tree can be constructed from it, which is an impossibility in the case of the uncorrected text : see the *Quarterly Statement*, 1905, p. 333, where the relationship between the persons mentioned is tabulated. The following names have been found on the seals and jar-handles above mentioned: Ziph, Ezrah, Shebaniah, Hebron, Soco, Menahem, Abd-Hadad, and Micah. Of the two long passages inserted in the text, one (" and Ezrah had . . . Miriam ") is

a conjectural emendation of my own, to fill up a gap whose existence has long been recognized : the other " (Dalilah . . " Menahem ") is inserted from the Greek version. Specially striking is the light thrown on the obscure reference to " Bith- " iah daughter of Pharaoh," which has been a puzzle to every generation. No one could explain what connexion Bithiah had with the genealogy, and how a Hebrew person of no apparent importance came to marry an Egyptian princess. It is now suggested that this passage was an obscure way of hinting that the persons mentioned adopted the " scarabaeus " for their coat of arms, for we have found it on their seals. The scarabaeus is an Egyptian religious emblem, and this is what the chronicle means by the " Daughter of "Jehovah[the meaning of Bithiah]daughter



FIG. 41.—JAR HANDLE STAMPS, SHOWING THE FLYING SCARABAEUS, THE WORD "FOR THE KING" AND THE POTTER'S NAME.

(The handle in the centre bears the name of Hebron, the other two of Soco.)

"of the king of Egypt." It is an allusive method of description in accordance with Hebrew methods of expression. And to establish the connexion yet more closely, in the case of four potters we find not only the name as it appears in the list (exactly in two; in the other two the copyists of the genealogy have introduced slight modifications) and the scarab, but also the words "for the king" on the seal stamped on the jar-handle, recalling the sentence with which the passage quoted closes (fig. 41). But for a further analysis of the corrections proposed, and their justification, reference must be made to the paper already alluded to, where also the following deductions are set forth:—

(1) That the genealogy is that of a family called from an ancestor named Menahem the *Menuhoth*, who owned as

their ultimate founder Caleb, son of Jephunneh, and who are mentioned in 1 Chronicles ii. 52, 54.

(2) That they inhabited a region south of Hebron, and there followed various crafts, principally pottery-making (1 Chron. iv. 14, 23).

(3) That the family was first brought to the notice of the king of Judah in the early part of the reign of Joash: one of their number, Memshath (written Mareshath) who lived in that reign being the first of the clan whom we find under royal patronage. It is suggested that he first attracted notice in connexion with the work of the restoration of the Temple under Joash (2 Kings xii. 4–16).

(4) That Shebaniah son of Ezrah was a person of considerable importance in the days of Uzziah, and was steward of the

royal estates at Carmel mentioned in 2 Chronicles xxvi. 10.

(5) That under the righteous kings, Amaziah, Jotham, and Uzziah, the heathenish symbol used as a coat of arms by the family was suppressed in public documents. And that in the name Abd-Hadad we can trace the influence of Ahaz, who was introducing the worship of Hadad and the other gods of Syria just about the time when this person was born, according to the chronological scheme deduced from the pedigree (2 Chron. xxviii. 23).

(6) That in the days of Hezekiah a raid of the wild, semi-barbarous tribe of Simeon took place on the territory of this family (1 Chron. iv. 39), and that they were compelled to seek another home. That they chose the south of Moab or

the north of Edom, and, driving out in their turn the worn-out remnant of the Amalekites, they settled there, and lived in a sort of semi-independence (ib. iv. 22).

(7) That after the return from the captivity they were established in Beth-Lehem, and under the name of Pahath-Moab (i.e. "the governor of Moab") assumed a position of considerable importance under Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra ii. 6, viii. 4, x. 30; Neh. iii. 11, vii. 11, x. 14).

Here then are seven statements all recorded in, or legitimately to be deduced from, the Biblical history; but they were isolated, and no one without a clue would have thought of connecting them. This clue was missing. A small basket-full of jar-handles, with their potters' names stamped upon them, was unearthed by

excavation and collected together. The stamp of a potter may be interesting as an archaeological curiosity; it may delight a philologist or a palaeographer by displaying a peculiar name or a peculiarly shaped letter, but it can hardly be expected to teach us much of historical value. Yet how precious seems the historical message of these humble jar-handles! We gather from them that the genealogies in the Book of Chronicles are just what they pretend to be—a record of the lives and relationships of human beings—and do not call for explanation by means of the ingenuity that has been expended upon them. They have taught us that one of the most difficult and obscure passages in the whole Bible is not, after all, seriously corrupt—such errors as it contains being no more than

what we might expect from a document founded, in the first instance, on " ancient records " which were probably torn and partly illegible, and transmitted to us by a long chain of copyists ; and they have enabled us to correct these errors. They have given us the links whereby we can connect a number of scattered Biblical passages, seemingly independent of one another ; and have brought into historical view men, in their own day of importance and influence, whose very names later generations had forgotten.

THE REBUILDING OF JERICHO

CHAPTER X

THE REBUILDING OF JERICHO

In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho : he laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gate thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub (1 Kings xvi. 34).

THE above is the rendering of the Revised Version of this passage. The Authorized Version, which reads "in Abiram" and "in Segub," if not so definitely intelligible in English, is closer to the language of both the Hebrew and the old Greek version.

The expression is ambiguous—perhaps purposely so—but it is open to the interpretation that these sons were offered by Hiel as a sacrifice, to avert any ill-luck

there might be lingering about the accursed site, and to secure good fortune for the inhabitants of the new city. Indeed, it is just possible that the meaning of the Hebrew particle, translated "in" by King James' translators, and "in the "loss of" by the revisers, here means "on," "upon," and that the statement is more definite than appears at first sight :—

Upon Abiram his firstborn he founded it, and upon Segub his youngest he set up its gates.

With this interpretation we have, as has often been suggested, an instance of the wide-spread custom of offering victims, human or animal, at the foundation of a building. The custom was observed by the Aztecs of Mexico ; it is still found among various tribes in Africa, Borneo,

Oceania, and India; even in Christian countries of Europe it is not unknown, as witness the legends of the infant walled up in Liebenstein Castle, and the church on Iona, built over the living body of Columba's companion, Oran. In countries where the advance of civilization has made human sacrifice impossible, animal sacrifice even yet takes its place, and examples of dogs having been buried under church walls are not unknown, just as in Muslim countries the sacrifice of a sheep accompanies the commencement of any important building.

The reason underlying the superstition no doubt is either the propitiation of earth-spirits, or the hope that the spirit of the victim will itself become a guardian of the spot. But as just hinted there may have been a special reason in the case

of Jericho. A tradition must have been preserved that when Israel entered the promised land Joshua had solemnly cursed the site of this, the first city captured by him; had set it apart as a place to be unoccupied and utterly devoted; and had indicated the sacrifice offered by Hiel as the penalty which infraction of the *tabu* would involve (Josh. vi. 26).

If it can be shown that foundation sacrifices were offered in Palestine as well as in the other countries above mentioned, it may be regarded as confirmatory of this interpretation of Joshua's prophecy and Hiel's fulfilment of it. And the necessary evidence is now forthcoming from Gezer, with a remarkable confirmation from the German excavations at Megiddo.

In a very ancient house at Gezer, built

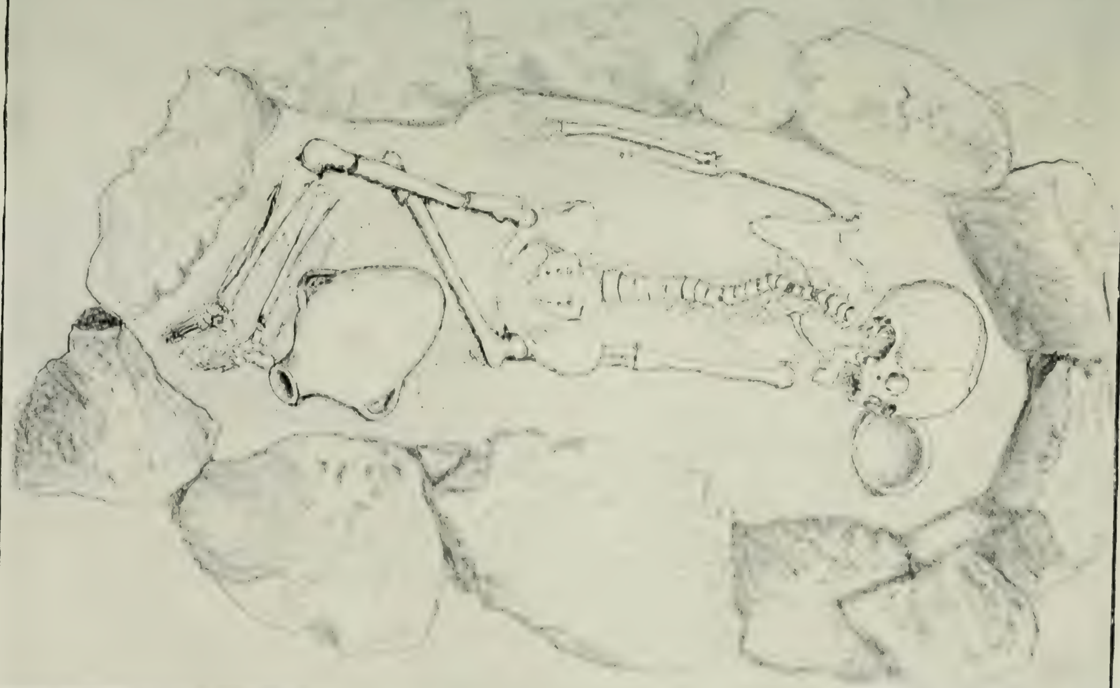


FIG. 42.—FOUNDATION SACRIFICE.

into a space left vacant at the corner, was found the skeleton of an aged woman having two food vessels deposited with her (fig.42). The position of the skeleton relative to the walls left no doubt that they were placed there at the same time, and that the woman was buried under the house in order to bring luck to its dwellers. The bones showed that the whole of the victim's right side had been crippled and distorted by some rheumatic affection: it appears as though she had been selected for immolation because she was a useless member of the community.

In another house, belonging to a rather later date, was found outstretched in the middle of a chamber the skeleton of a man. Here again bones and walls evidently belonged to the same period. Here again a useless member of the community

seems to have been sacrificed, for the man had lost his left hand.

In the German excavations of Megiddo there was found under a tower the skeleton of a young girl, perhaps some fifteen years of age, deposited in such a way as to leave no doubt that it was essentially connected with the foundation of the building.

That these cases are not very common seems to show that the human victim was not offered, in Palestine, on every occasion, but only under exceptional circumstances such as those of Jericho. We cannot find a trace of the practice elsewhere in the Bible.

Infant victims were also offered—more often indeed than older children or adults. Numerous cases were found of infants, buried in jars, underneath or in the corners

FIG. 43.—LAMP AND BOWLS, A SYMBOL OF FOUNDATION SACRIFICE.

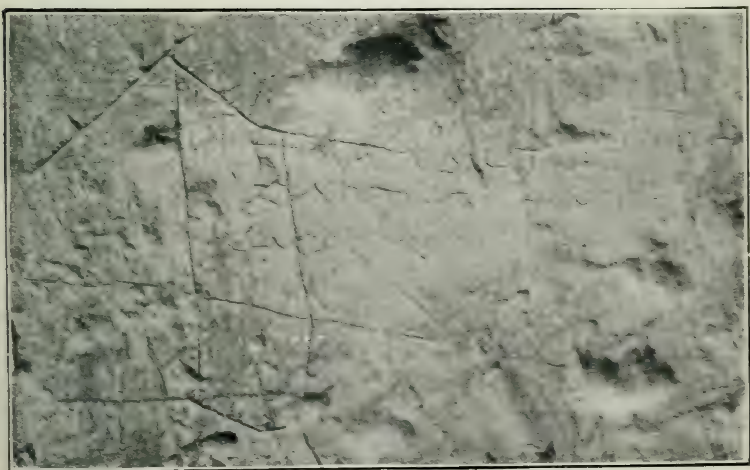


FIG. 44.—THE IMPRECATION OF PAMPRAS.

of the houses. With some a symbol of the sacrifice is deposited—a bowl which probably contained blood or grape juice, typical of blood; and a lamp, typical of fire. This is interesting, for in later epochs, when human sacrifice had fallen into disfavour, the human victim was omitted altogether, and the lamps and bowls alone took its place, as a symbolic reminiscence of the more savage rite (fig. 43).

The Vikings of the North Sea used to sprinkle their galleys with human blood; and, in unconscious remembrance of the custom, we still break a bottle of wine over a ship at her christening. The ancient Semites believed that human blood must wet the foundations of a house to give it stability and prosperity; and, in unconscious remembrance of the belief,

the modern peasant of Egypt buries the bodies of children who have not survived their birth inside the walls of his house. The discoveries at Gezer and Megiddo link these modern customs with the curse that Joshua pronounced and Hiel incurred.

THE MACCABEAN CONQUEST

CHAPTER XI

THE MACCABEAN CONQUEST

In those days he encamped against Gazara, and compassed it round about with armies: and he made an engine of siege, and brought it up to the city, and smote a tower and took it. And they that were in the engine leaped forth into the city; and there was a great uproar in the city; and they of the city rent their clothes, and went up on the walls with their wives and children, and cried with a loud voice, making request to Simon to give them his right hand. And they said, Deal not with us according to our wickednesses, but according to thy mercy. And Simon was reconciled unto them and did not fight against them: and he put them out of the city, and cleansed the houses wherein the idols were, and so entered into it with singing and giving praise. And he put all uncleanness out of it, and placed in it such men as would keep the law, and made it stronger than it was before, and built therein a dwelling-place for himself (1 Macc. xiii. 43–48).

THOUGH not within the compass of the Old Testament canon, and

therefore rather outside the limits set in this book, the discoveries bearing upon the incident graphically described in the above extract have been so remarkable that they cannot well be passed over in silence.

The events which led up to this capture of Gezer (Gazara is its Greek form) may be briefly summarized. Antiochus IV began his reign over Syria in 175 B.C. Greek influences in custom and religion had been insidiously affecting the upper classes in Palestine, despite the opposition of the Puritan party. A remarkable votive altar, found at Gezer, bearing on one side a dedication to Heracles, and on the other side the name Jehovah in its Greek form, is a tangible witness to this fact (fig. 45). Antiochus endeavoured to foster these foreign tendencies through the



FIG. 45.—VOTIVE ALTAR.

instrumentality of Joshua (or Jason, as he called himself), the renegade brother of the High Priest, who through Antiochus' influence himself obtained that office. In B.C. 171 he was supplanted by another paganising Jew, Menelaus; his endeavour to reinstate himself was treated by Antiochus as a revolt, and was followed by the spoliation of Jerusalem, the profanation of the Temple, and the active persecution of all who endeavoured to maintain the ancient Jewish rites and worship. An order was issued that in every village a heathen altar was to be set up. This order was resisted at the village of Modin, not far from Gezer, by Mattathias, an aged member of the priestly family. He slew both the royal commissioner and the first Jew who endeavoured to worship at the altar

which was erected. Immediately, under the leadership of Mattathias, a revolt broke out through the country. On the death of Mattathias, in B.C. 166, the leadership passed to his son Judas, surnamed Maccabaeus (a word of uncertain meaning) who headed the Jews for the five following years in their resistance to the pagan tyrant. We cannot follow at length his fortunes in the struggle, nor those of his brother Jonathan who succeeded him after his death at Elasa in B.C. 161; but it is in point for our present purpose to notice that at the beginning of the latter's leadership the city of Gezer, together with sundry other strongholds, was occupied and fortified by Bacchides, the general of the Syrian army. Soon after, the first war came to an end, and for four years there was peace, during which, how-

ever, the heathen retained hold of Gezer.

In B.C. 153 war was renewed, the immediate cause being Jonathan's partisanship in a dispute for the now vacant Syrian throne. It would lead us too far from our subject to retell the story of the complicated military and diplomatic events of the next ten years; let it suffice to say that at the end of this period Jonathan found himself a prisoner in the hands of Tryphon, an officer of Alexander Balas, whose claims to the throne of Syria Jonathan had originally espoused.

Simon, Jonathan's last surviving brother, took his place as leader of the Jews. He had already distinguished himself by the capture of Joppa and Beth-zur; now he had only to meet and repulse Tryphon, in the first year of his leadership,

to end the war. That done, he set himself to strengthen the country and to expel any foreign influences that might weaken it, strategically or morally. With this in view, he first paid attention to the heathen garrison still in Gezer, and the passage at the head of this chapter is the story of its capitulation. His son John he left as governor of the city; he himself went to Jerusalem to take office as High Priest. In 135 he, with two of his sons, was murdered by his own son-in-law, who aimed at supremacy; but the messengers sent to Gezer to add John to the victims were themselves slain, and John succeeded to the High Priesthood.

A passing reference in a letter written by the Roman Senate to John, preserved by Josephus,[1] is the only literary indica-

[1] *Antiquities of the Jews XIII.* ix. 2.

tion we have of the restoration of Gezer to the Syrian power, a fact illustrated, however, by the excavations, to which it is now time to turn.

As a specimen of the process of excavation, and of the "trial and error" methods that, in interpreting results, have to be followed, I shall cast the account of the discoveries bearing on these historical events into a narrative, rather than into a descriptive, form, such as has hitherto been adopted in this book.

In the summer of 1904 the work was concentrated on the ancient cemeteries round the hill. These, of course, produced the richest "plunder," and in consequence *the bakhshîsh* account was high. But the Syrian peasant is never satisfied. One or two of them hit on the scheme of holding back from a handful of beads or

similar objects a few specimens, to produce whenever a day should come on which luck did not favour them, thereby ensuring that their wages would receive a regular increment every day.

This, of course, was utterly destructive of any scientific record of the contents of the tombs. It is, however, difficult to train new and untried workmen, and a labourer that knows his business properly is not to be lightly dismissed. I therefore established a "penal settlement" for the culprits; that is to say, I set them to trace the line of the city wall, a task which would give me the information I required, and which there was every reason to suppose they would find comparatively profitless. Part of this work was done by means of trenches and part by tunnels.

One day the wall, which was being traced along the south side of the mound, from east to west, and which had been followed for nearly six hundred feet, came to a sudden stop. The gap might have been at a gateway, or else a ruined section; I was not perfectly satisfied with either explanation, and in any case it raised a question to be investigated.

The men were therefore transferred to the west end of the wall, which had already been found in one or two places, and instructed to follow it eastward. Once more they came to a stop. There was thus a space in the middle of the south side, about three hundred feet in length, in which not a trace of the wall could be found. Trenches were cut at right angles across the line of the wall at various points in this gap, to search

for stones or foundations; but in every case they gave no result.

At the eastern termination of this gap the end of the wall butted against the end of a building, of which two or three courses only were exposed in the tunnel. At the foot of this building there seemed to be a causeway of stones. The masonry was much better than anything else on the mound, and on that account my first idea was that it could not be of the same date as the rude walls of which, at all periods, the ancient city was built. It appeared to be a castellated structure, with projecting towers; and I felt inclined to identify it with the Crusaders' castle of Mont Gisart, which was erected on this hill, but of which no remains have yet been found.

As soon as the work on the tombs was

finished, it became an obvious duty to follow the clue thus offered: to expose this building, whatever it might be, completely; and at the same time to try and find what had become of the city wall. An area was therefore marked out in the usual way, including the gap in the wall and the castellated structure, and the digging commenced.

A very short time was enough to dispose finally of the Crusader castle theory: the associated antiquities could not possibly have been used by mediaeval European knights. After a little further work it was found that south of and facing it were the foundations of a precisely similar, but much more ruinous, castellated wall, and that between these ran a pavement of cobble-stones, mounting up to the city. It now became clear that this

carefully built structure was a large gate, spanning a road leading into the town, which road passed over the line of the city wall; but still there was no trace of the wall itself.

At the same time a fresh puzzle presented itself. Some ten feet north of the line where the wall should have been, was a second wall, parallel with it. This I supposed at first to be the inner, older city rampart, which is found everywhere in the mound inside the outer wall; but I was not satisfied with this theory. The wall was thinner than usual; the foundations did not go down deep enough; and it was difficult to explain the complete destruction at this point of the later outer wall, and the comparatively uninjured condition of the much more ancient inner. And when a totally un-

expected gate made its appearance, in the inner wall, elaborately built of well squared stones, with an independent causeway of its own leading out of the city, and associated with late pottery, the problem became even more exacting.

It was about a month after the excavation at this spot began that the solution of these problems presented itself to me. The practice of publishing a periodical account of the excavations has been deprecated by some writers, apparently on the ground of the incompleteness and want of finality which must necessarily characterize each individual report. But this trifling demerit does not outweigh the advantages of the practice. Not only is it the obvious duty of the Society to keep the subscribers informed of the progress of the works to which they

contribute, but the excavator himself receives a most valuable mental stimulus from the mere process of putting a connected account of his discoveries on paper. In the case of the perplexing discoveries just mentioned, their true meaning was revealed to me when, on a quiet November evening in the camp, I was drawing a plan of them for the following number of the *Quarterly Statement*. The following train of argument presented itself to my mind :—

(1) Here are two gates, side by side, each leading in and out of the city: query, what is their mutual connexion ?

(2) They are obviously contemporary, for both are associated with Maccabean pottery, and are on the same archaeological level.

(3) Therefore, as both are of Maccabean

date, the wall in which is the second gate cannot be the ancient inner city wall, for that was covered up and forgotten long before the Maccabean period.

(4) Therefore the wall in which this gate is found, though on the line of the inner city wall, is independent of it—a fact also indicated by its narrower proportions. As it is obviously north of the line of the outer wall, it is independent of that also. Therefore it cannot be a city wall at all. This conclusion is also indicated by the intrinsic improbability of two contemporary city gates being so close together.

(5) If this wall be not a city wall, it must belong to some important building, such as a castle; and that castle must have been under the control of some person who had the right of passing

through it into and out of the city at any time. Such a person can only have been the military governor of the city.

(6) Here then we are led to a governor's castle of the time of the Maccabees. This irresistibly recalls the " house " built by Simon after his capture of the city. Is it not likely that Simon would have adapted this castle, rather than build another, had it been already in existence when he took the city? and that a governor later than Simon would have adapted Simon's own building? It is most improbable that *two* governors' castles belonging to the same period should exist in the one city.

Thus I was led to the conclusion, quite unexpected when I began, that I had actually before me the dwelling-place of Simon Maccabaeus. Viewing the wall

in this new light, one difficulty was solved at once—it was clear what had become of the 300 feet of the outer city rampart. Simon's siege-engine had begun the damage—and it was a striking fact that, just where the wall was ruined, a natural terrace in the hill-side made this the most suitable place round the whole hill for manipulating a battering ram—and the breach had been completed in the course of building the castle. Evidently it was resolved to fill the breach, not with a length of blank wall, but with a citadel; and the stones were removed from the length of superseded wall to supply materials for the new structure.

This conclusion was, of course, as yet only a probable working hypothesis, which, like the Crusader castle idea, might with further research have to be

abandoned. The first thing to do, evidently, was to look for the inner city wall, in order to demonstrate its existence apart from the wall that had now become so interesting. This was done: a deep trench was dug, and the ruins of the inner wall were found far below and quite distinct from the wall in question. Then it remained to clear out the castle, chamber by chamber, in order to see whether evidence of the theory were forthcoming. The result was at first disappointing. It soon became clear that the castle had been looted thoroughly before it was ruined and covered over, and it seemed as though it were going to remain obstinately silent about its former occupier.

But once more the unexpected happened. The evidence was found, not by



FIG. 46.—THE CASTLE OF SIMON MACCABAEUS.

(The long wall in the background is that of the Castle: the gate is at the extreme left-hand end of the picture. In the foreground is the associated causeway and city gate).

the careful workmen in the chambers, but by one of the basket-girls, whose quick eye fell upon some marks on a fragment of stone lying on a little heap beside the outer wall. She brought it to me, and I saw that it was a Greek inscription, rudely scratched in an almost illegible cursive hand. Several hours of patient study were required before the writing could be deciphered.

But the labour was well repaid. This little block of limestone, a fragment of a larger building stone, with its rough scribble upon it, proved of thrilling interest. It called up the picture of Simon, with his victorious Jewish following, marching against the city and besieging it; of the panic-stricken Syrians—isolated now, after the repulse of Tryphon—crowding on the wall, cringing for

their lives to the great High Priest. The strokes of the battering ram once more rang on the walls, the tower fell, and the men in Simon's siege-engine leaped into the city. The zealous leader proceeded not to sack, but to purify the city. Heathen families were turned out of their houses, that household gods might be sought for and destroyed; idols were overturned, and the city subjected to a general purging. The pagan Syrians were dispossessed, and their places taken by those "who would keep the law."

Of course the Syrians did not take this spoliation tamely; yet feeling themselves too weak and unsupported, they feared to resist the conqueror. But one of them, Pampras by name, did more than harbour resentful feelings. He endeavoured to wreak his revenge on Simon in

secret by the methods of magic. Just as witches in old time—and even to-day in remote regions—revenge themselves on enemies by maltreating an image of them, in the expectation that the injury will be transferred to the living person, so Pampras thought he would blast Simon by arranging that a curse against him should be built into the very walls of his house. He managed to get access to one of the building stones, scratched his imprecation, and departed satisfied (fig 44). The stone was duly built into the wall, and it was this stone that I held in my hand. The inscription ran :—

(*Says*) *Pampras : may fire pursue Simon's palace !*

Here we have the first contemporary reference to any of the Maccabees, and the missing proof that the building was

actually the castle that Simon built and John his son inhabited (fig. 46).

When the Syrians recaptured Gezer they probably razed the fortress of their arch-enemy. Certainly it was found plundered and ruined to the foundations. Over part of it was found built a very remarkable bath system, consisting of seven chambers containing basins, a furnace for heating water, and also rooms set apart for plunge and even douche baths. The floors were all paved with cement, and a drain was provided for carrying the waste water away (fig. 47).

This later Syrian occupation, however, did not last long. By the time of Christ, about a hundred years later, the site of the ancient city of Gezer was finally ruined and deserted.



FIG. 47.—SYRIAN BATH ESTABLISHMENT AT GEZER C. 100 B.C.

EPILOGUE

IN the very last week of the excavation, when the permit was on the point of expiry, a few graves of a very remarkable cemetery were discovered. The stature of the bodies in the tombs was unusual for Palestine, where men of great height are exceptional: in one case the stature would have been anywhere remarkable. We seemed almost on the point of coming into contact with the Philistine giants whom David's men slew at Gezer.[1] But the Government permit expired, and we were regretfully compelled to leave this suggestive field of work unexamined.

[1] 1 Chron. xx. 4.

EPILOGUE

Palestine exploration is as yet in its infancy. The labours of Robinson, Tobler, Wilson, Conder, Clermont-Ganneau, Schumacher—to name but a few—have given us a topographical foundation on which to work; but we are only *beginning* to learn what surprises await us under the surface. It is true that till now there has been but one "Moabite Stone"; but assuredly there are others awaiting the spade of the excavator.

In one sense, however, it is to be feared that the *end* of Palestine Exploration is in sight. Those great foes to science, the wealthy collector and the curio-hunting tourist, after doing irreparable injury to Egypt by raising a brood of unscrupulous dealers and marauding natives, have in recent years turned their attention to Palestine, and already the

damage done to ancient tombs and other remains in the country is incalculable.

Every day pages are being torn from the book of history which is written in the ancient remains of the country—pages whose contents we shall never know, and which so long as the world lasts will never be replaced. The work of exploration and recording must be done *now*. Even while the reader peruses these words, some ignorant native may be breaking into a tomb, in search of saleable gold and glass, and so disfiguring an inscription that would settle some vexed Biblical problem. Wanting this inscription the problem may remain unsolved to the end of time.

As soon as a new permit can be obtained from the Imperial Ottoman Government it is hoped that the work of excavation

in Palestine will be resumed. Surely the Palestine Exploration Fund should not plead in vain for support in aid of its efforts to preserve some record of these precious, fast-perishing relics—relics of a past that appeals to all who value the Bible as a volume of literature, as the record of a history, or as the Word of God !

THE PREVIOUS WORK OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND

APPENDIX

THE PREVIOUS WORK OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND

1865. On 22 June, 1865, a public meeting was held in Willis's Rooms, London, under the presidency of the Archbishop of York, at which it was resolved to constitute a Society to be called "The Palestine Exploration Fund" for the scientific investigation of the Holy Land. The chairman, in his opening address, indicated that there were three guiding principles which were essential to the success of the project. These were—

(1) That the work undertaken must be conducted on strictly scientific principles;

(2) That the Society should as a body abstain from controversy;

(3) That the Society was not to be a specifically religious Society.

In other words, that every possible precaution should be taken to ensure the accuracy of the recorded observations in every department of the Society's work; that the Society as a body should take no responsibility for the deductions and arguments of individual contributors; and that it should take no part in religious controversies. These principles have been carefully observed by the Fund in all its undertakings.

The leading spirit in the foundation of the new Society was Mr. (afterwards Sir George) Grove, the versatile and indefatigable contributor to Smith's *Bible*

Dictionary, and editor of the great *Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*

1865–6. No time was lost in sending out an exploring expedition, which left for Palestine in the end of the year of the Society's foundation. The leader was Captain (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilson, whose recent death all interested in the purposes of the Palestine Exploration Fund must deplore. Captain Wilson had already (1864) distinguished himself in Palestinian research by his detailed study of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and by his great survey map of Jerusalem, prepared at the time when the Baroness Burdett-Coutts had proposed a scheme for bringing water to the Holy City. In this first expedition of the Society a considerable amount of preliminary work was done: including the preparation of

the first authoritative sections of the surface of the country ; a reconnaissance of its central region ; the investigation of the synagogues at Tell Hûm (Capernaum) and other places in Galilee ; the settlement of some geographical questions previously unsolved or disputed ; the measurement and delineation of a large number of churches, castles, mosques, etc. ; and certain excavations at Damascus, Shechem, and Jerusalem.

1867. In the following year it was resolved, as the centre of interest in Palestine is, naturally, Jerusalem, to despatch a party to determine all that could be discovered touching the vexed questions of Jerusalem topography. This expedition was under the direction of Lieutenant (now Sir Charles) Warren. It occupied three years, from 1867 to

1870. If Warren's expedition did not accomplish all that was expected of it—for the controversies which it was hoped once for all to settle are still acute—it nevertheless revolutionized most of the theories that till then were held respecting the ancient topography of the city. Warren's work formed the foundation on which all who devote themselves to the inexhaustible subject of Jerusalem must base their own investigations.

During these years was found the Moabite Stone, one of the greatest archaeological discoveries ever made in any country; the stone tablet from Herod's temple, with a Greek inscription warning Gentiles against entering the sacred enclosure, was also discovered.

1870–1. These years were distinguished by the adventurous journey made across

the Desert of the Exodus by two distinguished Arabic scholars, Professor Palmer, afterwards murdered in the Sinaitic Peninsula, and Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, who died in 1874 at the early age of twenty-eight from the malaria of the Jericho valley, where he was at the time engaged in the service of the Society. In this journey, which the travellers accomplished alone and disguised as natives, a considerable number of the stations referred to in the history of the wanderings of the Israelites were located, and other important discoveries and observations were made.

A word must here be given to the labours of M. Clermont-Ganneau, now Professor of the Institut de France, who at that time was in Jerusalem in the French Diplomatic Service, and who did

much valuable work on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund in the early seventies. The results of this work have been collected by the Society into two handsome volumes, so that it is unnecessary to allude to them here at length; we must not, however, omit to notice his identification of the site of Gezer, with the recent excavation of which the present book is more directly concerned.

1872–80. In 1872 the *magnum opus*, to which all the preceding work was to a certain extent preliminary, was seriously begun. This was a detailed ordnance map of the whole country. It occupied the full attention of the Fund for many years. The survey party was first commanded by Captain Stewart and Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake; but the former was invalided almost at the beginning, and

the latter died, as already mentioned, in 1874. Their places were taken by Colonel Conder, whose name is a household word among all interested in Biblical researches; and Lieutenant Kitchener, now Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. The work was temporarily interrupted by a murderous attack made on the party by the natives of Safed in June, 1875; but it was shortly afterwards resumed, and the map was completed in 1880, eight years after its commencement. In the following years seven large quarto volumes were published, containing all the archaeological, zoological, and other observations made during the survey. We cannot here pause to analyse or describe the scope of the work; it will be sufficient to quote the words of Sir Walter Besant, the late secretary of the Fund: "Nothing

" has ever been done for the illustration " and right understanding of the his- " torical portions of the Old and New " Testaments, since the translation into " the vulgar tongue, which may be com- " pared with this great work."

1881. In 1881 the companion survey of Eastern Palestine was commenced by Colonel Conder. The political conditions, however, were at the time unfavourable to such work in that region, and it was soon found necessary to abandon the undertaking, the results of which, so far as they had gone, were published in 1883. Some important identifications, including that of Kadesh, were made during the few weeks in which Colonel Conder was allowed to work in the country east of Jordan.

1883–4. Though, as is perhaps natural,

topography and archaeology have been the principal fields in which the Society has worked, it has never been forgetful that there are other equally important fields which come within its scope. One of these branches of investigation is the geology of the country, and with this in view a party, under the leadership of Professor Hull, was sent out in 1883. The complex geology of the district between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah was for the first time systematically worked out by this expedition.

1885–90. For the five years from 1885 to 1890 the Society continued to publish in the *Quarterly Statement* regular reports and investigations, contributed by residents in Palestine and others, though no formal expedition was undertaken. Among the contributors may be

mentioned Dr. Schumacher, well known for his detailed surveys of different districts in Palestine; Canon Tristram, the late eminent naturalist; Dr. Merrill, United States Consul at Jerusalem, and leader of an American survey expedition, which independently did good work east of the Jordan; and Dr. Conrad Schick, who for over fifty years resided in Jerusalem, and made a close study of all its many problems.

Among the discoveries of these years may be mentioned that of a reservoir, by many identified with the Pool of Bethesda, and the famous "Alexander" sarcophagus at Sidon.

1890–92. Hitherto the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund had mainly consisted of surface observations, accompanied here and there by comparatively

insignificant excavations.[1] The year 1890 marks an era in the history of its work. In this year for the first time it obtained an Imperial firman for excavating one of the four or five hundred *tells*, or mounds of rubbish, in which the cities of the Israelites and of the other ancient races of Palestine lie concealed. The selection fell on Tell el-Hesy, the Biblical Lachish ; and the director chosen was Dr. Flinders Petrie, the eminent excavator of Egypt. Dr. Petrie held the firman for a few weeks only, during which time he determined the main details of the stratification of the mound, and laid down the principles on which objects found in Palestinian mounds may be dated. He was succeeded in the work by Dr. Fred-

[1] Excepting, of course, Warren's work at Jerusalem.

erick Bliss, who till 1901 was the representative of the Society.

The excavation of the site of Lachish first revealed what a wealth of material was awaiting the spade of the digger in the mounds of Palestine. Beside the unearthing of many individual objects of interest—chief among which was the famous cuneiform tablet, the first to be found in Palestinian soil—the main lines were determined on which the investigation of an ancient Palestinian city must be carried out.

1894–97. After the completion of the work at Lachish the Society again turned its attention to Jerusalem, and Dr. Bliss, with the assistance of Mr. Archibald Dickie as architect and draughtsman, worked there for three years. The work was not so richly supported as Warren's

work had been, in the early years of enthusiasm; but still a large amount of systematic research was carried on, and many important discoveries were made, chief among which was the course of Nehemiah's wall, and the church built by the Empress Eudocia over the Pool of Siloam.

1898–1900. In 1898 Dr. Bliss, assisted by the present writer (who succeeded Mr. Dickie as architect), commenced an important series of excavations in the Hill Country of Judaea. Four mounds were partially excavated, including the probable sites of Azekah, Gath, and Mareshah (the city of the prophet Micah). An immense amount of material was unearthed; among the most important was the first Canaanite High Place ever found, and an inscription of Arsinoe.

1902–5. In 1901 Dr. Bliss resigned his connexion with the Fund. In 1902, after the completion of the memoir on the previous season's excavation, the examination of Gezer, identified some thirty years before by M. Clermont-Ganneau, was commenced under the author's direction. It is unnecessary here to describe this work, as some of its principal results are detailed in the preceding pages.

During this period of activity, the work of the Society had continued to profit by the labours of investigators other than its official representatives. The *Quarterly Statement* of these years contains a most valuable series of papers and descriptions of new discoveries. We may mention, as a small selection from this mass of material, the brilliant articles on archaeological subjects by M. Clermont-Ganneau ; Dr.

Masterman's researches and observations on the level of the Dead Sea ; Mr. Baldensperger's accounts of the daily life of the modern inhabitants ; Mr. Hanauer's collections of folklore ; the late Dr. Glaisher's papers on meteorology ; the description of the wonderful painted tombs at Beit Jibrin, found by Drs. Thiersch and Peters ; and Miss Gladys Dickson's remarkable discovery of the tomb of Nicanor of Alexandria, an eminent benefactor to Herod's temple.

In an appendix to this book will be found a classified list of all the publications issued directly by the Palestine Exploration Fund, or under its auspices ; so that the reader who may wish to learn further details concerning the results of any of the researches that have been briefly summarized in this chapter will know

where to find the information he is seeking. In the present work we have confined ourselves to one task only—the recent exploration of Gezer—and have considered it entirely from the point of view of the Bible reader. Even from this standpoint much that might be said has, from considerations of space, been omitted. For the present we have passed over in silence all the lessons the mound has to teach regarding the general history of civilization, art and religion.

AS a pendant to the foregoing brief account of the activities of the Palestine Exploration Fund, we subjoin a classified and priced catalogue of the works that have been published directly by itself or under its auspices, in which the results of the researches of its officers,

supporters and contributors, are set forth in full :—

I. HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND RECORD OF ITS WORK AND PROGRESS.

The Quarterly Statement. Issued quarterly to subscribers from April, 1869. (2*s.* 6*d.* each part).

Index to the Quarterly Statement, 1869–92. (2*s.*).

Besant, Sir Walter, *Thirty Years' Work.* (3*s.* 6*d.*).

Our Work in Palestine. (Out of print).

The City and the Land ; Seven Lectures on the Work of the P.E.F. (3*s.* 6*d.*).

Harper, *The Bible and Modern Discoveries.* (7*s.* 6*d.*).

II. WILSON'S EXPEDITION.

Published in letters issued to subscribers. (Out of print).

III. WARREN'S EXPEDITION TO JERUSALEM.

Warren, *Underground Jerusalem.* (Out of print).

—— *The Recovery of Jerusalem.* (Out of print).

Jerusalem volume in the Survey *Memoirs.* (Out of print).

IV. PALMER AND DRAKE'S EXPLORATION.
See *The Quarterly Statement* for 1872.
Palmer, *Desert of the Exodus*.

V. GANNEAU'S RESEARCHES.
Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*. (2 vols. £5 5*s*.).

VI. THE SURVEY OF WESTERN PALESTINE.
Map of Western Palestine, 1 inch to the mile. (26 sheets and portfolio, £3 3*s*.; single sheets, 2*s*.)
For smaller Maps founded on the Survey see the official list issued by the Society.
Relief Map, ⅜ inch to the mile. (£13 13*s*.).
Smaller Relief Map, 6¼ miles to the inch. (£6 6*s*.).
Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine. (3 vols. 4to. Out of print).
Name Lists in *Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine*. (1 vol. 4to. Out of print).
Special Papers in *Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine*. (1 vol. 4to. Out of print).

Jerusalem in *Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine.* (1 vol. 4to. Out of print).

Tristram, *Flora and Fauna of Palestine.* (£3 3*s*.).

Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine*, (6*s*.).

Armstrong, *Names and Places in the Old and New Testaments, and their Modern Identification.* (6*s*.).

VII. THE SURVEY OF EASTERN PALESTINE

Conder, *The Survey of Eastern Palestine.* (£3 3*s*.).

—— *Heth and Moab.* (6*s*.).

VIII. THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Hart, *Fauna and Flora of Sinai.* (£2 2*s*.).

Hull, *The Geology of Palestine.* (£1 1*s*.).

—— *Mount Seir.* (Out of print).

IX. THE TELL-EL-HESY EXCAVATION.

Petrie, *Lachish.* (Out of print).

Bliss, *A Mound of many Cities.* (6*s*.)

X. DR BLISS' EXCAVATIONS AT JERUSALEM AND IN JUDAEA.

Bliss and Dickie, *Excavations at Jerusalem.* (12*s*. 6*d*.).

Bliss and Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine.* (£2 10*s*.).

XI. Dr Schumacher's Surveys.

Schumacher, *Across the Jordan*. (Out of print).

—— *The Jaulan* (6*s*.).

—— *Abila, Pella, and Northern Ajlun*. (6*s*.).

XII. Miscellaneous Works on Palestinian History and Antiquities.

Conder, *The Tell Amarna Tablets*. (5*s*.).

—— *Syrian Stone Lore*. (6*s*.).

Warren, *The Ancient Cubit*. (5*s*. 6*d*.).

Conder, *Judas Maccabaeus*. (4*s*. 6*d*.).

Besant and Palmer. *The City of Herod and Saladin*. (7*s*. 6*d*.).

Conder, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 1099–1291 A.D. (7*s*. 6*d*.).

Beha ed-Din, *The Life of Saladin*. (9*s*.).

The Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. (13 vols. £10 10*s*.).

Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*. (16*s*.).

Thiersch and Peters, *Painted Tombs at Marissa*. (£2 2*s*.).

The Office and Museum of the Palestine Exploration Fund are at 38, Conduit Street, London, W.

INDEX

INDEX

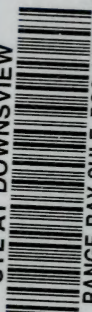
INDEX

INDEX

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

INDEX

Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.


UTL AT DOWNSVIEW
D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 15 16 02 16 019 0